Hafa Adai!

DoD breaks ground today on divert airfield project on Tinian. PAGE 3
Ethics Committee meeting on complaints vs Propst not streamed live. PAGE 3

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

www.saipantribune.com
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2022
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Volume XXXII, Issue No. 37

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:04pm, Feb. 21, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated: **55.9%**

Days since last community transmission: **2**

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,987
Fully Vaccinated:	37,019
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,329
Fully Vaccinated:	5,188
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,136
Additional Dose:	20,845

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	42,544	0*	42,544
Recovered	37,055	0*	37,055
Active	5,173	0*	5,173
Deaths	316	0*	316

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	8,422	222	8,644
Recovered	6,765	230	6,995
Active	1,401	222	1,623
Deaths	26	0	26

* No Update

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

PORT CALL

MARK FARMER

Guided by three tugboats, the USS *Emory S. Land* steams past Mañagaha yesterday morning on its way to the Port of Saipan. The USS *Emory Land*, homeported in Guam, is one of only two submarine tenders of the U.S. Navy, so it would be a reasonable assumption that a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine (or submarines) are operating in the area and may conduct a low-key port visit to Saipan to conduct training with the USS *Emory Land*.

IN LAWSUIT FILED BY TURKISH WORKERS VS IPI

$477K partial judgment vs IPI

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted partial default judgment in favor of the group of Turkish workers who had sued Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC for failing to pay them their wages under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Last Friday, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona granted IPI's former Turkish workers partial default judgment in the amount of $477,935.91 for both FLSA causes of action stated in their suit against IPI; failure to pay wages guaranteed by the FLSA, and for retaliation under the FLSA.

The court will soon issue a detailed decision.

According to the previous motion for partial default judgement filed by Richard Miller, who is the Turkish workers' lawyer, IPI kept sending its Turkish H-2B workers to the construction site to work for months on end without paying them on time, or at all, in violation of the FLSA.

When the workers walked out, IPI allegedly retaliated. Then, when they sued in federal court, IPI didn't even come forward and defend itself. "It has abandoned the workers it brought to Saipan to build their hotel," Miller stated.

The H-2B construction workers from Turkey—represented by Ozcan Genc, Hasan Gokce and Suleyman Kos—filed this lawsuit against IPI and IDS Development Management & Consultancy in the U.S District Court for the NMI last November 2020.

They claim they were

See IPI on Page 4

Torres willing to commit ARPA funds for new hospital or expansion

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday he is willing to commit part of the American Rescue Plan Act funding to build a new hospital or expand the main hospital on Saipan.

In response to inquiries during a radio press briefing about the plan to build a new hospital, Torres said that he and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther L. Muña have been looking at some figures to commit from ARPA. He said the amount depends on the proposal and they can provide specific figures once they move forward with the plan.

Torres

As to the location, the governor said they looked at different areas and it always come back to

See TORRES on Page 4

COVID-19 UPDATE

12 hospitalized, 222 new cases

A total of 12 individuals are hospitalized right now as a result of COVID-19, according to the latest report of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Of that number, six are unvaccinated, five are vaccinated, and one is partially vaccinated. One of the 12 is on a ventilator.

This comes as 222 more have been confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI total to 8,644 cases since March 26, 2020.

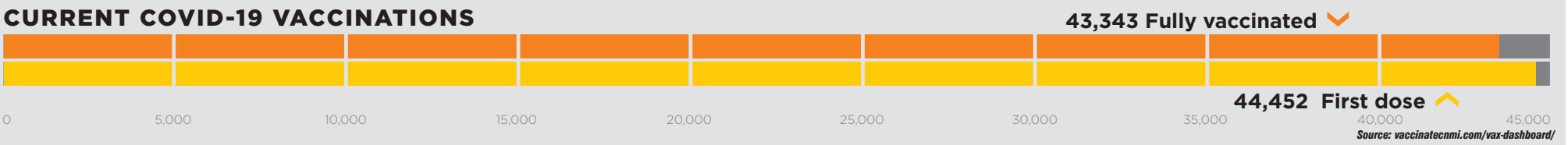
Of the 222 cases identified,119 were identified on Feb. 19, 2022 and 103 prior to Feb. 18, 2022; two of the new cases were identified on Tinian. The vaccination statuses of the 222 cases are pending verification.

Of the total number of cases that have been identified in the CNMI, as of Feb. 19, 2022, there have been 6,995 recoveries;1,623 active cases; and 26 COVID-19-related deaths. A total of 8,020 of these cases were identified via community testing, while 624 were identified via travel testing.

Individuals who test posi-

See 12 on Page 4

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

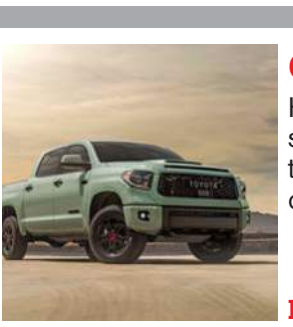


Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

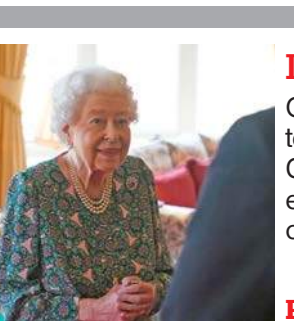
WORLD
Russia takes another step closer to what the United States say is a planned invasion of Ukraine.

Page 13



OVERDRIVE
Hybrid or EV? Pickups show how Toyota and the Detroit Three differ on electrification.

Page 14



LIFE & STYLE
Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for COVID-19 and is experiencing mild, cold-like symptoms.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

MCS ACHIEVERS

Mount Carmel School congratulates the following students for making it to the 2nd Quarter President's List & Honor Roll.

PRESIDENT'S LIST
Students must have a GPA of 4.00 or above and must attain character marks of VG or above.

1st Grade
Ariah Kadyn Deleon Guerrero
Arielle Aniciete
Aubrey Matsunaga
Benz Elliott Santos
Brayden Kane Taguchi
Farrell Dela Santa
Gabriella Salome Gamab
Haleina Mae Maratita
Ines Maratita
Jayven Xander Sablan
Jesse Joseph Gregory Palacios
Jeter Yamada
Ji Yoo Lee
Leilani Soledad Castro
Lloyd Manuel Sencio
Mika Backe
Mya Joy Manibusan
Rockson Cabrera
Sho Sasamoto
Sophia Reese Arriola
Sumai Francine Castro
Vincent Salavaria

2nd Grade
Aiden Ray Cepeda
Aleaya Bermudes
Candize Paige Delos Reyes
Crystin Pangelinan
Ezekiel Ma'Nu'I Villagomez
Gabriella Jo Tenorio
Gino Marvin Deleon Guerrero
Jake Hiram Maratita
Jamara Jayde Cabrera-Sablan
Kaiya Pangelinan
Khoen Alexander Coldeen Torres
Prescott Jonathan Cabrera
Sinako Annette Leiyangscheng
Tagabuel
Stella Choi
Yuna Yu

3rd Grade
Aiyana Pangelinan
Alesa Ilmova
Anah Bellah Guerrero
Brayden Luke Repata
Chloe Jane Militante
Clarise Garamonte
Erika Cuyugan
Friella Huanne Dela Santa
Ivan Fernand Fortades
Jake Peter Deleon Guerrero Jr.
John Damien Sablan
Jonathan Zhang
Kendra Camacho
Kirk Ivan De Perio
Liam Sablan
Logan Propst
Neia Dolana Noreyemal Tagabuel
Oliveeah Julee Kaipat
Vinae Jaydene Pua

4th Grade
Adelle Jane Kautz
Advika Vallabhaneni
Amber Faith Militante
Avah Mae Delacruz
Chloe Anne Marie Matsunaga
Daniel Kang
Ezaela Patrice Camacho
Jeongwoo Choi
Ji Woo Lee
Karl Angelo Diaz
Kathleen Cano
Kennani Vinae Villagomez
Ki Eun Lee
Miana Dolores Delacruz
Paige Kanae Cabrera
Victoria Eve Terlaje
Von Derick Lauron

5th Grade
Bentley James Albuen
David Joseph Camacho
Jaden Shyne Fujihira
Jaze Enzo San Nicolas
Joey Claude Mostales
Kainoa Tenorio
Logan Matsumoto
Ryusei Asai
Seungjae Ha
Trisha Juliana Abuan

6th Grade
Alexia Rubia
Arthur Deliva
Audrey Bansil
Cecilia Ramon Villagomez
Cyril Michael Pangilinan
Do Geon Kim
Dylan Jacob Camacho
Jessi Chen
John Ellama
Katherine Hwang
Kayla Larson
Layla Carmen Ann Palacios
Mary Shelley Deleon Guerrero
Siwoo Lee

7th Grade
Hope McQuay
Iris Maleia Rasa
Jeffrey Concepcion
Jose Clarence Tenorio
Josephine Lopez
Justin Mallari
Kaden Christian Propst
Kaitlyn Alexza Drilon
Naomi Skye Matsumoto
Nicole Angela Pangilinan
Sage Ramon Villagomez
Serenity Anne Fujihira
Seungwoo Choi
Stephanie Joyce Sevilla

8th Grade
Arwen Hannah Bartolata
Asa Backe
Chae Eun Kim
Emmanuel Pontiveros
Gavril Myles Santiago
Heleyna Frielle Dela Santa
Jessiana Tenorio
Kate Nicole Cabalbag
Kayli Ari Salas
Leonard Jake Regalado
Mikayla Castro
Mya Pangelinan
Oscar Bien Buenaflor
Patricia Denielle Lugtu
Seunghee Jeon
Victor Nash Santos
William Matthew Cano

9th Grade
Alvin Hong
Ari James Toskas
Chealzka Navarro
Chloe Alexis Camacho
Irie Kane Camacho
Jaeyun Jung
Jay Francis Dominic Pineda
Jee Woo Son
Laizza Vianca Mallari
Lyssa Rae Steele
Maili Peter
Malina Rose Tenorio
Tricia Antonnette Palacios

10th Grade
Avah Marie Torres
Brandon Lee
Breanna Sue Mafnas
Earle Gabreil San Nicolas
Eunkyu (Joey) Hong
Gwen Tiffany Gamab
Ierlyma Nicole Deleon Guerrero
Jazmin Jay Tagabuel
Jeery Chen
Jonathan Sheu
Juliana Vergara
Kriselle Bryana Mitzy Drilon
Leo Bang
Leyonne Alfred Tolentino
Maria Yoshie Torres
Marini Millo
Minki Jung
Paul Angelo Santos
Ruben Guerrero
Sanghyeok Lee
Tian Si Xu
Tyana Kisha Tesiro
Xin Wen Jin

11th Grade
Brent Ortizo
Brissa Hunter
Clint Allen Irang
Dohyun Lim
Donnie James Jr. Militante
Erin Frink
Francine Monique Albuen
Gerald Jr. Deleon Guerrero
Jazmyn Phoeme Lopez
Jill Anne Marie Mallari
Kina Dela Cruz
Kyla Monique Cabrera
Leunyce Regalado
Manuel Jacinto Pangelinan
Mathew Adrian Sablan
Raeka Shereen Lantin
William Xue
Yurihana Rosa Sasamoto

12th Grade
Aleia Santos
Christian Guerrero
Christopher Adam Mafnas
Fiona Marielle Bucalig
Gayle Noreen Vidal
Hannah Lacap
Hyunkyu Park
Jefferey Sheu
Jeremiah Jerome Diaz
Jihwan Ryu
Joshua Donovan Tenorio
JunBeom Kim
Kaia Travilla
Larry Dean Cruz
Monique Laura Duenas
Raesyl Gerard Solis
Regina Huerto
Richard Jesus Villagomez
Richard Ramon Steele
Robin Kyle Alvarez
Theresa Rose Schweiger
Vaughn Andrei Mallari
William Nathaniel Ano
Yu Jeong Son

HONOR ROLL
Students must have a GPA of 3.6or above and must not have any behavior grade of U or NI.

1st Grade
Brian Anthony Reyes
Eduardo Vicente Diaz II
Miriam Flores
Shinely Vincent
Yanchen Cui

2nd Grade
Aiesha Sadie Camacho
Aycee Rianne Quitugua
Caleb Deleon Guerrero
Chloe Nicole Arnold
Daena Jade Camacho
Edward George Flores II
Felix Ryan Tomokane
Jace Pangelinan
Jack Joseph Junior Sablan
Maven Borja
Vialanni Maleigh Alexis

3rd Grade
Anaiah Roque
Madden Anthony Deleon Guerrero
Minjoon (Michale) Jeon
Okamura Jaxon Itisoorschigh
Tagabuel
Sera Guerrero
Soli Maratita
Yu Ma
Zion James Ulloa

4th Grade
Aiyah Elise Igitol
Ava Carmina Sablan
Cali Jade Cabrera
Chloe Cepeda
Francisco Joseph Cruz
Franko Ray Tudela
Heaven Agnes Deleon Guerrero
Krish Devjani
Lydia Xian
Mikayla Guerrero
Nirvana Wolf
Talina Aguon-Mcclure

5th Grade
Aaron Wu
Angelo Li
Anna Lee
Bella Deleon Guerrero
Caleb John Aldan
Caydince Raine Masga
Elijah Dela Cruz
Hyun Woo Cho
James Matsumoto
Leighton Tomokane-Tenorio
Leonmar Jaedon Regalado
Liana Margaret Deleon Guerrero
Maria Guerrero
Mia Guerrero
Miguel Garret Mendoza
Nea Zoe Dandan
O-Ren Fumiyo Sasamoto
Zian Michael Obnimaga

6th Grade
Aya Santos
Cassidee Jolina Flores
Ciana Lei Demapan
Jadine Nicole Pangelinan
Janessa Francine Arriola
Jener Franz Pineda
Ju Hwan Hyun
Kimason Cabrera
Remiegem Melchor

7th Grade
Carly Dela Cruz
Christine Rosanne Castro
Christopher James Dela Cruz
Enzo Umeki Sasamoto
Ethan Jayce Tomokane
Henry Yeom
Hiromi Rosa Sasamoto
Jee In Lee
Matthew Guerrero
Maya McQuay
Mei Xu
Patricia Matsumoto
Pedro Jose Tomokane
Rafael Elijah De Belen
Sarah Angela Melchor
Stephen Yeom
Yukiko Kiyomi Sasamoto

8th Grade
Alexandria Dysangco
Andrick Poon
Annieskha Arreza
Ayanna Faith Matsumoto
Camron Zavier Pangelinan
Elise Maratita
Eloy Deleon Guerrero
Jasmine Meleana Deleon Guerrero
Kern Han
Lance Jericho Javier
Luis Manibusan
Michael Mercado Jr
Mikaehla Paige Mendoza
Quince Emanuele Tizon
Sophia Tenorio
Therese Joy Ogo
Zion Jude Cabrera

9th Grade
Aryana Carmen Taimanao
Audrein Jennifer Mallari
Breana Ysabel Patawaran
Chelsy Anne Reyes
Dylan Santos
Earl Pete Jacob Lacandazo
Enjing Jin
Hitomi Rosa Sasamoto
Jada Chang
Katie Gah-Eun Yoon
Kimberly Villegas
Mia Ysabela Abuan
Nicole Erin Mariano
Princes Amanda Habal
Ranier Joy Solis
Sihyeon Choi
Vayden Matagolai
Yunseong Seol

10th Grade
Angel Li
Ashley Jo Sablan
Charles Pablo Cepeda
Deseha Iha Mendiola
Devin Jordan Propst
Elisa Ellen Blanco
Ethan Jude Militante
Irish Castro
Jhazmyn Nhicole Valiente
Kevin Jia Qi Bao
Miguel Nathan Bartolata
Miguel Villegas
Natalie Gabrielle Ano
Palikkun George
Paul William Camacho
Raymana Owen Salas
Tian Jiao Xu
Tiana Torres

11th Grade
Carlo Crisdeo Diaz
Da Hyun Shim
Derek Moritaro Sasamoto
Kayannie Ilifighar Peter
Kristan Rose Torres
O'Hane Borja
Vidal Jose Camacho

12th Grade
Ariel Morales
Ha'ani Seman
Hyun Namkung
Hyunjun Kim
Jedric Nathaniel Villar
Karvin Fernando
Kwon Joon Ha
Michael Canice Camacho
Vidal Jose Sablan

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DoD breaks ground today on divert airfield project on Tinian

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S Department of Defense, along with the Commonwealth Ports Authority, Tinian Municipality, and CNMI government will be breaking ground on the long overdue U.S. Air Force divert airfield project on Tinian today.

According to Kimberlyn King-Hinds, Commonwealth Ports Authority chair, today's ceremony will kickstart the first and second phase of the project that has been in the works since 2020.

"Tomorrow's ground breaking is to kickstart the first and second phase of the divert airfield project on Tinian. This project has always been envisioned to be an economic catalyst that would help bring jobs and business opportunities not just for Tinian, but for the entire people of the Commonwealth," she said.

According to the CPA resolution in regards to the divert airfield project, the U.S. government, through the U.S. Air Force, signed the Record of Decision for the Divert Activities and Exercise, CNMI Final Environmental Impact Statement on Dec. 7, 2016.

These facilities are intended to be built largely on the north side of the Tinian airport. Additional facilities required for the U.S. to achieve divert capabilities are intended to be built at the Port of Tinian.

U.S. Congress appropriated $21.9 million for the acquisition of the properties.

Then, on May 2019, The U.S. Department of Defense, the Commonwealth Ports Authority, and the CNMI government signed off on the 40-year lease agreement worth $21.9 million for certain airport and seaport properties on Tinian for the U.S. Air Force's divert airfield.

The deal allows the Air Force to use Tinian as an alternative landing site for its planes—a divert airfield—in case Anderson Air Force Base in Guam is inaccessible due to war or calamities.

The divert airfield is not only a training but an operational requirement for the Air Force. King-HInds said in the event that something catastrophic happens to Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, the Air Force needs somewhere to go.

Free webinars on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars this February and March on federal contracting. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

· Feb. 24 - Federal Contracting Responsibilities - Department of Defense vendors need to protect themselves from cyberattacks. We will discuss DOD's current requirements as well as the upcoming Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification (CMMC 2.0).

· March 3 - How to get HUBZone Certified - All of Guam is a HUBZone. The Guam PTAC will take you through the certification process, the required supporting documents, and follow-up requirements from SBA.

· How to get 8(a) Certified - The 8(a) program is a business development program for companies owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The Guam PTAC will discuss eligibility, the online application, and follow-up documentation.

· How to get Women Owned Small Business Certified - WOSB is an official SBA certification program. We will discuss the online certification process as well as supporting document requirements.

· SBA Mentor-Protege Program - The SBA Mentor-Protégé program allows small businesses to team up with large businesses without running afoul of affiliation regulations. The Guam PTAC will update you on the eligibility requirements, the application process, and follow-up requirements.

· Responding to Requests for Proposals - The Guam PTAC will walk participants through the common sections and clauses of an RFP as well as provide tips on developing a proposal in response to an RFP.

To register, visit: www.guamptac.com. *(PR)*

Torres: Ethics Committee meeting on Propst complaints not streamed live was troubling

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said Friday he found it troubling that the House of Representatives Special Committee on Official Conduct and Ethics did not stream live its meeting during which they tackled the two complaints against Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan).

In response to a request for comment during a radio press briefing about the Ethics Committee's meeting, Torres said that Democrat lawmakers always talk about transparency and that they have nothing to hide, yet the meeting was not streamed live, which makes him wonder why.

The governor said he is not sure exactly what the details were of the two complaints against Propst, but what is troubling is he thought it was going to be livestreamed.

He said all of his hearings before the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee were livestreamed.

Torres questioned why the Ethics Committee, chaired by Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), did not allow the community to see, through livestreaming, what's going on at the hearing.

"That's the troubling part," he said.

The governor, however, stated he is happy that the Ethics Committee decided Thursday to move forward with the complaints against Propst. Torres said the House should look into the complaints seriously.

He said he is hoping that the Ethics Committee will stream live their next meeting, just the way the JGO did at every hearing in its investigation into his expenditures of public funds and travels.

The Ethics Committee had agreed to get more information on one of the complaints against Propst and to proceed with the investigation into another complaint against the lawmaker.

Manglona did not reply to Saipan Tribune's request Thursday for comment as to why the meeting was not streamed live.

Saipan Tribune learned that the first complaint refers to the one filed last Nov. 9 by Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae over allegations that Propst had sex with several underaged women approximately 20 years ago when he was still a teacher at the Marianas High School and an employee at the Northern Marianas College. Vaiagae is a counselor and advocate for the rights of abused women.

Propst has denied the allegations in Vaiagae's complaint.

The second complaint refers to the one filed last Dec. 15 by Robert H. Hunter, the senior policy adviser at the Office of the Governor. Hunter filed the complaint against Propst over the latter's remarks that circulated on social media where he allegedly made physical threats and used inappropriate language against Hunter and other people. Propst said Hunter is a cyber bully. *(Ferdie De La Torre)*

WANTED: SPORTS REPORTER

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
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is looking for a sports reporter.

Qualifications:
- First and foremost, must be a fan of all manner of sports;
- Must have a creative flair in writing;
- Comfortable with interviewing people;
- Able to work on weekends and at night;
- Team player.

Perks
- Not a boring 9-to-5 job;
- You'll meet a lot of people;
- Watching sports is your job;
- Up close and personal to the CNMI's biggest sporting event this summer—the Pacific Mini Games 2022.

No writing work experience? We are willing to train! Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

WANTED: GRAPHIC ARTIST

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a full-time graphic artist.

The ideal candidate must know how to use InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; can work fast and is able to work in a deadline-oriented environment; must be quick to grasp instructions; and must be able to create ad designs, concepts, and layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.

Supercharge your graphic design career by learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing!

Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

Villagomez: We don't dispose unless absolutely necessary

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In an effort to run sustainable quarantine facilities, the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force disinfects and reuse materials like beddings after previous COVID-19 positive patients are cleared and released.

According COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez, the hygiene and disinfection process at the COVID-19 quarantine sites mirrors that of the Commonwealth Healthcare Center, which means materials like beddings are not disposed of unless absolutely necessary.

"Our hygiene and disinfection process at our quarantine sites basically duplicates CHCC. We don't dispose of materials unless it's totally soiled where it can't be reused," he said.

Villagomez said the task force works with laundry services that specializes in cleaning and disinfecting linens.

"We work with the appropriate laundry service that provides the correct solution that is up to our disinfection standards. We don't waste or throw anything away unless we need to. It's all determined by our standards," he said.

Meanwhile, in terms of cleaning services, the COVID-19 task force chair said some sites use their internal cleaning staff while others outsource.

The Kanoa Resort quarantine site specifically uses its internal cleaning service while the Pacific Islands Club Saipan outsources theirs.

"For Kanoa, they have their own internal cleaning services and they're willing to go into the rooms to clean COVID-19 positive rooms. For PIC, they choose not to. I believe they're engaged with Top Line. It's an external company that provides that service for COVID-19 positive rooms," he said.

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From Page 1

tive for COVID-19 should stay home and isolate when they are sick (except to get medical care), even if they do not have symptoms; rest; stay hydrated; can take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, to relieve symptoms; and live COVID-19 safe.

Individuals experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should stay home and live COVID-19 safe (except to get medical care or get tested for COVID-19). Other options include seeing their health care provider or calling the CHCC Tele-Triage hotline at (670) 233-2067. For a guidebook on how to live COVID-19 safe, visit www.staysafecnmi.com/livecovidsafe.

The report continues to encourage the community to get vaccinated if they have not done so, or get their booster shot if they are eligible to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, or death.

Unvaccinated individuals are at risk of serious illness from COVID-19, and unvaccinated individuals spread the virus at a higher rate than vaccinated individuals, thereby increasing the spread and risk of serious illness toward other unvaccinated individuals.

Stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised or booster doses for those who are eligible. Register for COVID-19 vaccines at www.vaccinatecnmi.com, or call (670) 682-7468.

Individuals aged 18 or older are now eligible to avail of a booster shot; 12- to 17-year-olds can avail of a Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization.

To view the schedule for Community-Based Testing, visit https://covidtesting.chcc.health. No code is required to register. Pre-registration highly recommended as slots are limited. Reserve your slot to get tested before you line up and all slots are filled.

While you wait to get tested or for your test results, stay at home as much as possible and limit your contact with others. Live COVID-19 safe: wear your mask; wash your hands; watch your distance; avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces; cover coughs and sneezes; clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily; be alert for symptoms daily; and get tested for COVID-19. ***(PR)***

UOG Press book to reach global audience under NY publisher

The University of Guam Press published author Julian Aguon has received a publishing contract with Astra House in New York City to re-publish his book *The Properties of Perpetual Light* under the new title *No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies*.

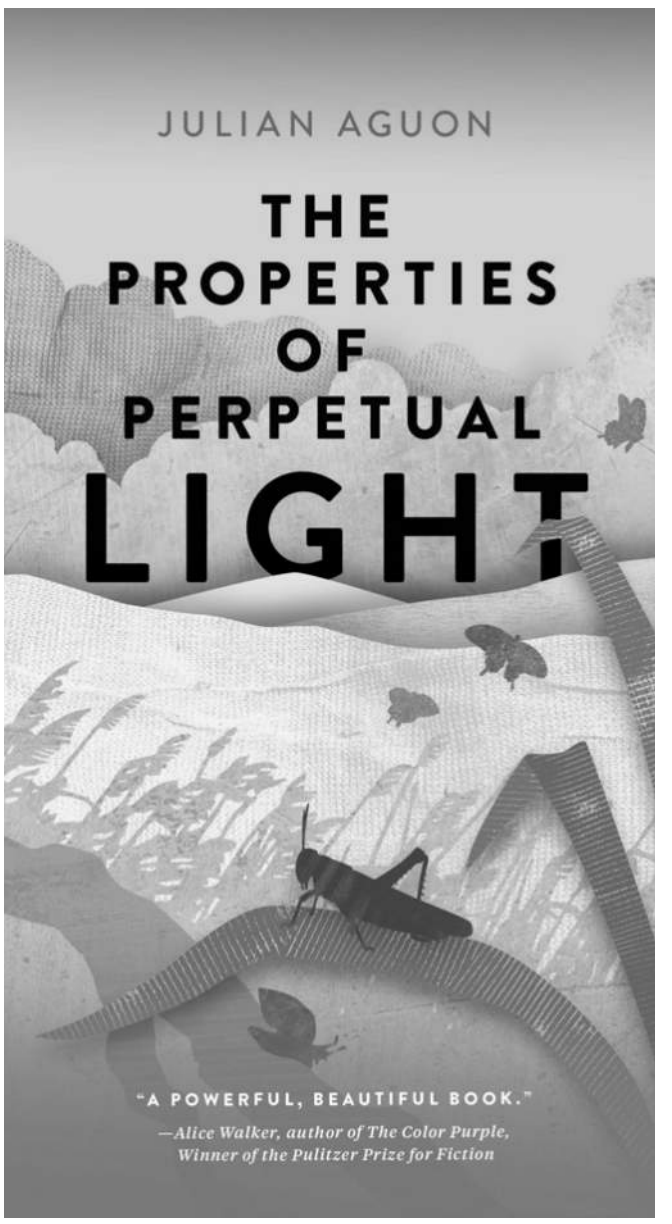
The book, expected for release on Sept. 13, includes an introduction by Booker Prize–winning author Arundhati Roy and a new afterword by Aguon.

The University of Guam Press, which published the work last February, will continue to publish and distribute the book as *The Properties of Perpetual Light*. It remains available for purchase at uogpress.com and in stores throughout Micronesia.

The book is a memoir that weaves together stories from Aguon's childhood in the villages of Guam with political commentary about everything from nuclear weapons to climate change. Throughout the book, Aguon grapples with one loss after another by immersing himself in the beauty of his island, the magic of Micronesia, and the wisdom of his favorite books and elders.

"Astra House is an exciting new publisher committed to social justice and will take my book and the stories of our island to a global audience," Aguon said. "None of this would have been possible without the incredible vision and support I received from UOG Press and their director of publishing, Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero."

Astra House publishes "books for children and adults that celebrate excellent storytelling, have a strong point of view, and introduce readers to new perspectives about their everyday lives as well as the lives of others," according to its website.


JULIAN AGUON
THE PROPERTIES OF PERPETUAL LIGHT
"A POWERFUL, BEAUTIFUL BOOK."
—Alice Walker, author of The Color Purple, Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM PRESS

The Properties of Perpetual Light by Julian Aguon and published by the University of Guam Press has received another publishing contract with Astra House in New York City, where it will be published under the new title No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM PRESS

Julian Aguon, author of *The Properties of Perpetual Light*, is an indigenous human rights lawyer and writer from Guam. He is the founder of Blue Ocean Law, a boutique international law firm that works across Oceania at the intersection of indigenous rights and environmental justice.

For more information or to order copies of *The Properties of Perpetual Light*," contact Via De Fant at (671) 735-2153 or devantv@triton.uog.edu.

About UOG Press

University of Guam Press is a publishing house under the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam. Using a peer-review process, UOG Press publishes literary works to advance regional scholarship, develop cultural literacy, and expand accessibility to knowledge about Micronesia. Since the press was revived in 2015, it has produced more than 55 publications and journals and sold more than 40,000 books under its major publishing imprints of MARC Publications and Taiguini Books. The books are available for sale in local bookstores and at www.uogpress.com. ***(PR)***

IPI

From Page 1

forced to eat Chinese food, not paid the minimum wage and overtime, and were allegedly not paid their salaries for multiple payrolls. The workers also accused the defendants of retaliation for the workers' protest actions.

IPI allegedly promised the Turkish workers that it would hire a cook who could prepare the kind of food suited to them. They were also promised above-minimum wage, substantial overtime pay, and round-trip tickets.

However, the workers said the meals IPI gave them were Chinese food that were "practically inedible" for Turkish people so they ended up buying their own food and cooking for themselves. It was not immediately clear if their opposition to Chinese food was for other than the reason they cited in the complaint.

Aside from IPI allegedly breaking its promise to hire a cook that specializes in Turkish food, the group stated they also weren't paid the wages they were promised.

Genc, a foreman and welding team leader, said IPI changed his title to carpenter and promised him a salary of $21,840 a year. Gokce, a plumbing foreman, said he was given the title plumber and was also promised $21,840 per annum. Kos, an electrician, was promoted to electrical foreman and was also promised the same salary.

When the workers stopped work on Sept. 11, 2020, for three weeks in protest, they said IPI stopped providing them with drinking water and internet services at their barracks and also stopped their access to company vehicles.

TORRES

From Page 1

the fact that there is already a main hospital and that it would be easier and better to just expand it.

Torres said the most ideal is to build the expansion closer to the main hospital building.

He said they don't want to wait three years to build a new hospital, but if that's how long it would take for the federal government to get a comprehensive study on the subject, then the CNMI should take that advantage and utilize that proposal.

In the meantime, Muña has her own priorities and Torres said maybe they can address one or two of those priorities. He noted that the top priority is to build a portion, if not extend, at least the Intensive Care Unit rooms and build an MRI and CT scan unit. At present there are only four beds at ICU, so they are hoping to increase that, he added.

"Those are the things that we want to increase and have the capacity for the CNMI and other special treatments that CEO Muña and our doctors recommend," Torres said.

He said they should act on those specific concerns and address those as they wait for the overall or comprehensive study of the federal government.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 9 Office will visit at the end of this month to do an assessment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers about building a new hospital.

Torres said this topic of building a new hospital is not new as he and Muña have been talking about it for years.

He said they have worked on pushing forward on getting MRI machine and other specific medical care that they need to address for the current health issues in the CNMI.

He said they are looking at having a separate building for the MRI and other scanning device that needs to be upgraded at the hospital.

Torres said when the pandemic came in, they looked at what the hospital immediately needs so they built a parking lot north of the hospital.

"To some that's not a big deal, but it is to everybody that's going to the hospital," he said.

Muña disclosed that a meeting at the end of this week is going to be a brainstorming discussion with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Region IX. The CEO said present at the meeting will be governor's authorized representative to FEMA Patrick Guerrero, COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez, doctors and nurses, and representatives of the administration.

NMI is seen to finally have 24-hour palatable water'

Sablan

With over $100 million in federal funds for the next five years, the Marianas is expected to reach its goal of having a 24-hour palatable water for all residents of the islands, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) over the weekend.

In his e-kilili newsletter, Sablan thanked Commonwealth Utilities Corp. officials for giving him a tour Thursday of the new concrete water tank in San Vicente.

He said CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho, chief engineer Larry Manacop, project manager Alley Reyes, and acting Water and Waste manager Yvonne Cabrera-Ogumoro showed him the work that's already in progress with the new 0.75-million-gallon concrete water tank.

The delegate said the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is providing $100 million over the next five years for water systems in the CNMI.

Sablan said the American Rescue Plan Act intended for Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to use some of his $482 million Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery account for water infrastructure.

These funds, he said, together with Super Typhoon Yutu recovery money and the increasing annual funding from the U.S. Congress for the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water Act ($8.4 million estimated in fiscal year 2022), make it possible for the CNMI finally reach the goal of 24-hour palatable water for every resident of the islands.

In September 2020, Sablan disclosed that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has announced an award of $17.51 million to the Marianas for water and sewer infrastructure.

He said $10.4 million of these funds come from a specific set-aside for the Marianas that he included in the 2019 disaster relief act, U.S. Public Law 116-20.

The delegate said the balance of $7.19 million is from funds set aside for the Marianas and other territories in the EPA appropriation for fiscal year 2020, U.S. Public Law 116-94.

Sablan has been able to increase the EPA set-aside every year since 2010. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

Public warned of rip currents, rough seas

The public on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Thursday afternoon. A small craft advisory is also in effect from 6am Tuesday to 6am Sunday.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present in east facing reefs of the Mariana Islands through Thursday afternoon.

Swimming will be hazardous. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The public is advised to stay out of the water along east facing reefs. Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water. Only swim near a lifeguard.

Also, starting today until Sunday, northeast winds of 15 to 25 knots and seas of 8 to 11 feet are expected in Marianas coastal waters. Seas and winds will remain at these levels for the next several days. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid navigating in hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES F0197
ATTORNEY AT LAW
P.O. Box 500740 CK, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 234-7859, Fax. (670) 234-5749
E mail: robert.torres@rttlawgroup.com
Attorney for Petitioner Jennifer M. Villagomez,

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF SUSANA TENORIO MAFNAS, Testator. : Civil Action No. 21-0316 : NOTICE OF HEARING ON THE PETITION FOR FINAL DISTRIBUTION : HEARING DATE: MARCH 3, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M. JUDGE: CAMACHO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Jennifer M. Villagomez Petitioner, has filed with the Superior Court of the Northern Marianas Islands a **PETITION FOR FINAL DECREE OF DISTRIBUTION.** The attorney for Petitioner is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plate Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya) P.O. Box 500730, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition for Final Distribution has been set for 3rd day of March, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Guma'Hustisa, Civic Center Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. All interested persons or entities should appear at the hearing.

Dated this 15th day of February 2022.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

VINCENT J. SEMAN, CNMI Bar No. F-0361
Seman Law Offices, LLC
JET Realty Bldg., Suite 204
P.O. Box 10001 PMB 168
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 323-2115
E-mail: vjseman@semanlaw.com

Attorney for: Petitioner Kinberly Ayuyu Brooks

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF ANTHONY CRUZ AYUYU, Deceased : PROBATE CASE NO. 22-0038-CV : **NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION TO PROBATE and NOTICE TO CREDITORS** : Date: March 17, 2022 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORSOF THE LATE ANTHONY CRUZ AYUYU OR OF HIS ESTATE.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Kinberly Ayuyu Brooks, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of **ANTHONY CRUZ AYUYU**, "Decedent". The attorney for Petitioner is Vincent J. Seman, Esq., whose address is JET Building, Suite 204, Chalan Pale Arnold, Gualo Rai, PO Box 10001 PMB 168, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition to probate the Estate of Decedent by Petitioner is scheduled to be heard on March 17, 2022 at 10:00am, at CNMI Superior Court Room 220A, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors or entities having claims against the Decedent or his estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within Sixty (60) days of the first publication, or the claim(s) will be barred. A copy of your claim should also be sent to VINCENT J. SEMAN, Esq. at his address herein-above indicated.

Dated this 18 February 2022.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW22-ITB NO.: 42200064

SUBMISSION DATE: March 15, 2022 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Kagman Pathway Lightings, Saipan"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **February 08, 2022** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars ($100.00**) is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **February 24, 2022**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 10, 2022** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR,
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-22-018

LEASE AND DELIVERY OF MIDSIZE SUV VEHICLES FOR ADMINISTRATION

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the lease and delivery of midsize SUV vehicles for the CUC Administration in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $50.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked ***"CUC-IFB-22-018, Lease and Delivery of Midsize SUV Vehicles for Administration"*** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on March 10, 2022** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing **no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on February 17, 2022**, to Manny B. Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with copies to Jenine Santos, CUC Purchasing Technician at Jenine.santos@cucgov.org, and Marcela Tenorio at email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in the said bids, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids submitted shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

Tels: (670) 233-9447
233-9448
233-9449
233-9450
Fax: (670) 234-9451

PUBLIC NOTICE

02/22/2022

Notice for Public Comment

Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year:	Program	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming Amount:	Proposed Revised Project Budget:	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
PY 2020	CDBG	CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) Purchase of Personal, Protective, Equipment	CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services	$106,000.00	($106,00.00)	$0.00	$106,000.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:		**$106,00.00**	**$106,00.00**		
NEW	CDBG	CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) Purchase of (2) Watercraft Rescue Units and (2) All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)	CNMI Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services	$0.00	$106,00.00	$106,000.00	$0.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**$106,00.00**		

The new project is considered a Public Services project which is subject to a 15% cap of the CDBG grant estimated allocation of $970,416.00 and remains within the cap. Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming of funds over $100,001.00. Therefore, comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central office located in Garapan, Saipan, and in the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before March 25, 2022 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at (670)234-6866/9447.

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Court dismisses case vs man accused of firing pistol in Garapan

The NMI Superior Court has dismissed the case against a man who was accused of firing a pistol in Garapan back in November 2021 because the victim, who was also the main witness, died last month.

Last week, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho granted assistant attorney general Steve Kessel's motion to dismiss, with prejudice, the case against Norman Desebel Kapileo, 47, because the victim, and the government's main witness, died last Jan. 21, 2022. Dismissal with prejudice means the case cannot be filed again.

Kapileo was charged with assault and battery, assault with a dangerous weapon, and disturbing the peace following an incident back on Nov. 4, 2021, when he allegedly fired a pistol in Garapan.

Camacho vacated Kapileo's jury trial that was previously set for June 6, at 9am.

According to court documents, Department of Public Safety officers responded last Nov. 4, 2021 at approximately 10:48pm to a report of possible gunshots in an abandoned apartment in Garapan.

At the scene, police spoke with the alleged victim, Peter Aldan, who told police that Kapileo came to the abandoned building looking for another individual but when Aldan said he did not know where the other individual was, Kapileo got mad and pulled a gun out of his pocket and "pistol whipped" him.

Police noted that the person Kapileo was looking for had a fight with Kapileo's brother on Nov. 3, 2021.

The victim told police that when he realized that it was a gun that Kapileo was holding, he reached for it and held Kapileo's right arm and wrist in an attempt to take the gun away from him, prompting Kapileo to shoot a round. The victim said he continued struggling with Kapileo as he tried to take the gun away from the suspect. The victim stated he even bit Kapileo's finger in an effort to take the gun away.

During the struggle, the victim said three or four more shots were fired, but he could not recall which direction it was fired.

The victim stated that when he and Kapileo fell to the ground, he hit Kapileo's hand hard enough and the gun flew out of his hand, landing far south from where they had fallen. Kapileo then reportedly fled the scene with the gun before police arrived. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

Hamilton scholarship deadline extended to March 5

Hamilton

The deadline to apply for the 2022 OCW 670 Retta Sue Hamilton Scholarship has been extended to March 5, 2022.

This scholarship, which celebrates the life and life's work of Retta Sue Hamilton, is an initiative of the organization Our Common Wealth 670. It offers a one-time $1,000 educational scholarship to graduating CNMI high school seniors and to currently enrolled U.S. college students at an accredited university or college who graduated from a CNMI high school.

Applicants should be pursuing degree(s) in Environmental or Public Health, Public Policy and Governance, Diplomacy or other degrees that are in line with OCW 670's goal to "protect our ancestral lands, seas and skies from irreparable damage caused by military practices and other developments that pose a threat to our health, physical environment and livelihoods."

Student applicants shall submit an essay of approximately 500 words on what college they have been accepted into and how their studies will prepare them for future work and/or activism toward this goal.

The selection of the 2022 Retta Sue Hamilton Scholarship shall be made by the OCW 670 board. The selection will be final.

Essays must be submitted to ourcommonwealth670@gmail.com no later than March 5, 2022.

In accepting this scholarship, the awardee is to fully understand that:

- It must be their intention to complete their college degree.
- The selected recipient must provide official proof of registration into an accredited college for the upcoming semester.
- All applicants must average and maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher throughout the scholarship period.
- And that their essay submission is the property of OCW 670 and may be posted or published by the organization in its social media. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmi@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on ***Friday, February 25, 2022, at 9:00a.m.*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Governor's Office Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes - (from October 06, 2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairman's Report
VII. Director's Report
- Financial Report
- FY2023 Budget Call
- Upcoming National Council Meetings

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
- Update on the Appraisal Regulations Ad Hoc Committee

XI. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with counsel with pending or anticipated legal matters.
XII. New Business
XIII. Applications for Board's Review
XIV. Miscellaneous Business
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055 SAIPAN, MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) hereby gives notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, February 25, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. in the CPA Conference Room, Second Floor of the Captain George Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan on Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
1. Call to Order 3. Adoption of Agenda
2. Roll Call 4. Adoption of Minutes (November 19, 2021)

II. **PUBLIC COMMENT(S)**
III. **CORRESPONDENCES**
IV. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**
1. Financial Affairs Committee 3. Seaport Facilities Committee
2. Airport Facilities Committee 4. Personnel Affairs Committee

V. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
VI. **OLD BUSINESS:**
1. Insurance for Rota West Harbor's Small Boat Marina
2. Restructure of Operations Department
3. Off-site Car Rental Regulation
4. CUC Power Plant 2 (Rota)

VII. **NEW BUSINESS:**
1. Employee Contract Renewals:
a. Rota Ports Manager
b. Port of Saipan Manager
c. Staff Attorney
2. Adoption of Self-Care Regulations
3. Fiscal Year 2020 Audit
4. Supplemental Budget Request/Sanctioning:
a. Tinian Marina Improvements Change Order 1
b. Rota Airport Drainage Construction Management Services
c. Saipan Airport's ARFF Training Facility Change Order 1
5. Proposed Regulations: Airport Rate Methodology
6. Funding Request: Electrician

VIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
• Legal Counsel Reports: Legal matters/Litigation

IX. **MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS**
X. **ADJOURNMENT**

Persons are welcome to submit oral or written testimony on the agenda items. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Chairwoman, Board of Directors
February 17, 2022

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP • 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 | FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM | WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

NOTICE OF BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that there will be Board Committee Meetings on Friday, February 25, 2022, beginning 9:30 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room located on the second floor of the Captain George Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan on Saipan.

AGENDA

AIRPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 19, 2021)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Solar Request for Proposal (RFP) Status Report
2. CUC Power Plant 2 (Rota)
3. Off-site Car Rental Regulation

IV. **New Business:**
1. Updated Airport Facilities Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 19, 2021)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Restructure of Operations Department

IV. **New Business:**
1. Contract renewals:
a. Rota Ports Manager
b. Port of Saipan Manager
c. Staff Attorney
2. Adoption of Self-Care Regulations
3. Updated Personnel Affairs Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

SEAPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 19, 2021)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business:**
1. Tinian Marine Stevedore, Inc.
2. Echo Dock
3. Industrial Drive Road
4. Insurance for Rota West Harbor's Small Boat Marina

IV. **New Business:**
1. Mobil Oil Marianas Lease (Saipan Seaport)
2. Updated Seaport Facilities Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. **Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes (November 30, 2021)**
II. **Public Comments**
III. **Old Business: None.**
IV. **New Business:**
1. Fiscal Year 2020 Audit
2. Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning:
a. Tinian Marina Improvements Change Order 1
b. Rota Airport Drainage Construction Management Services
c. Saipan Airport's ARFF Training Facility Change Order 1
3. Proposed Regulations: Airport Rate Methodology
4. Funding Request: Electrician
5. Updated Financial Affairs Committee Report

V. **Executive Session (if needed)**
VI. **Miscellaneous/Announcements**
VII. **Adjournment**

Written testimony on the agenda items may be sent via email before the meeting to cpa.admin@pticom.com. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

Barrie C. Toves, Airport Facilities Chair
Ramon A. Tebuteb, Financial Affairs Chair
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MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) MVA-RFP-22-2048

Marianas Visitors Authority Office Space Lease

Submission/Closing Date: **February 24, 2022 Time: 11:00am ChST**
Submit sealed proposal to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building, Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after February 10, 2022 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00AM-12:00PM and 1:00PM-5:00PM., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-22-2048 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICE SPACE LEASE"** in the subject line to lmaratita@mymarianas.com

/s/ Ellsbeth Viola Alepuyo
Chairperson, MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Priscilla M. Iakopo
Managing Director, MVA

VEHICLE FOR AUCTION

2016 MAZDA 6, 4 DOOR SEDAN - DARK BLUE COLOR

For more information, please contact the Bank of Guam through its counsel, Robert T. Torres at Telephone Numbers (670) 234-7859 - (670) 234-5750.

Bids will be closed on
FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2022 AT 4:00 P.M

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offers

The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties – Minimum bid is $16,690.00
All bids must be received by 4:00p.m

Inspection and a vehicle bid form can be obtained from Bank of Guam counsel's office at:

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES
Attorney at Law
Chalan Kiya
P.O. Box 503758 CK
Saipan, MP 96950

4-H Marianas builds youth leadership capacity across NMI

Residents from the islands of Tinian and Rota received a chance to advance their leadership and media skills thanks to the 4-H Saipan Youth Council, 4-H Marianas, and the Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services-Family, Community, and Youth Development Program.

The 29 participants learned about time management, preparing a résumé, interview etiquette, public speaking, and preparing for college. Additionally, members of 4-H Marianas' production club taught the students the basics of photography, videography, graphic design, and media communications.

Elaiza Songco, a Tinian resident, said she is glad to have been able to participate.

"I felt really great about today's training because I met a lot of new friends," Songco said. "We learned a lot about time management, a lot about college preparations, and other information that we're going to be using in the future."

The skills taught at both workshops were designed to help Tinian and Rota students effectively market the 4-H activities happening on their islands, and to better showcase them in the CNMI and the nation.

Seminars taught by the 4-H Saipan Youth Council are part of the 4-H Leadership Professional Development curriculum that will be implemented in February and March in celebration of Youth Leadership Month.

"As an incoming '4-H'er' this helped me grow as a person and branch out with new people," Rota participant Frince Masga said.

4-H Marianas will be hosting leadership weekends on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota on the following dates:

■ Saipan Leadership Weekend:
Friday (Feb. 18, 2022)
Saturday (Feb. 19, 2022)
Saturday (Feb. 26, 2022)

■ Rota Leadership Weekend:
Friday (March 4, 2022)
Saturday (March 5, 2022)

■ Tinian Leadership Weekend:
Friday (March 11, 2022)
Saturday (March 12, 2022)

For more information about 4-H Marianas programs, visit their Instagram or Facebook page (@4HMarianas), email 4h@marianas.edu, or call Tonica Barcinas (Rota) at 783-1802, Joan Flores (Tinian) at 433-9235, or Robert Suzuki Jr. (Saipan) at 287–0895. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A total of 29 participants from the islands of Tinian and Rota recently enhanced their leadership and media skills after participating in seminars conducted by 4-H Marianas. The seminars, taught by the 4-H Saipan Youth Council are part of the 4-H Leadership Professional Development curriculum that are being implemented in February and March in celebration of Youth Leadership Month.

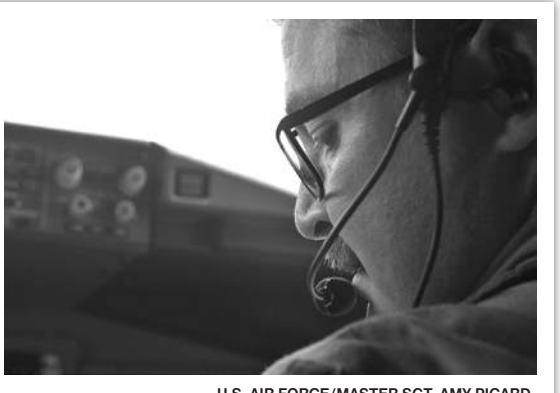
COPE NORTH 2022

U.S. Capt. Steven Strickland, left, and Capt. Henry Darr, instructor pilots for the KC-46A Pegasus assigned to the 334th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., fly over the Northern Mariana Islands during exercise Cope North 22, Feb. 15, 2022. Participants exercise Agile Combat Employment, or ACE, concepts during Cope North 22.

U.S. AIR FORCE/MASTER SGT. AMY PICARD

U.S. AIR FORCE/MASTER SGT. AMY PICARD

U.S. Capt. Steven Strickland, instructor pilot for the KC-46A Pegasus assigned to the 334th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., flies from Saipan to Guam during exercise Cope North 22 last Feb. 15, 2022.



U.S. AIR FORCE/MASTER SGT. AMY PICARD

U.S. Capt. Marcus Watson, mission pilot for the KC-46A Pegasus assigned to the 334th Air Refueling Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., prepares to take off from Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport during exercise Cope North 22 last Feb. 15, 2022. Participants exercise Agile Combat Employment, or ACE, concepts during Cope North 22. ACE is Pacific Air Forces' model to project combat power via a network of distributed operating locations throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXII, Issue No. 37

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The best path on Russia-Ukraine

To confront Kremlin aggression, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared Tuesday a "day of unity."

To achieve the same objective, President Joe Biden has galvanized a new era of unity among NATO allies and partners. While the solidarity may not prevent a Russian invasion, it has so far clearly communicated a consistent message to Russian President Vladimir Putin about the military, diplomatic and economic cost of any incursion.

And the NATO support has reassured Zelenskyy that Ukraine, like all sovereign nations, has a right to determine its own military and diplomatic direction.

The Western alliance, Biden said in an address to the U.S. on Tuesday, "is as unified and determined as it has ever been. And the source of our unbreakable strength continues to be the power, resilience and universal appeal of our shared democratic values.

"Because this is about more than just Russia and Ukraine; it's about standing for what we believe in, for the future we want for our world, for liberty," Biden continued. "The right of countless countries to choose their own destiny, and the right of people to determine their own futures, for the principle that a country can't change its neighbor's borders by force. That's our vision. And toward that end, I'm confident that vision, that freedom will prevail."

Perhaps it's begun to. Putin signaled a desire for diplomacy to continue, as well as a slight withdrawal of some forces. But Biden as well as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and independent military analysts have indicated that there is no evidence yet to back those claims, and in fact the opposite may be true.

Biden said that Russian forces "remain very much in a threatening position" and that more than 150,000 troops (higher than previous estimates) are encircling Ukraine along its eastern and southern border and from Belarus to the north. What's more, Ukraine suffered a significant cyberattack on Tuesday, with experts suggesting Russia was the likely culprit.

Biden reiterated that because Ukraine is not a NATO nation, U.S. troops will not fight in the event of an invasion. But the U.S. and several other alliance members have sent materiel to Ukraine to aid in its self-defense. Additionally, NATO has deployed more forces—including some Americans—to front-line nations in order to deter any possible Putin moves beyond Ukraine. "Article 5," Biden said, referring to the collective-defense clause of the pact, "is sacrosanct."

Michele Flournoy, former undersecretary of defense for policy during the Obama administration, said during a Wilson Center virtual event on Tuesday that in some sense Putin has exacerbated "one of his greatest fears"—a "strong NATO with a strong military posture in the front-line states of the Baltics and Poland and Romania, and so forth. And the irony of this crisis that he's manufactured is he has actually pulled NATO together, reinvigorated its sense of purpose and importance and buy-in across the board and will create a more

See BEST on Next Page

Wokeism has peaked

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg News

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. His books include Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero.

I'm calling it: Wokeism has peaked. Yes, it will remain a highly influential movement, and it will probably continue to spread globally. But in the U.S. at least, wokeism and the woke will ebb.

By wokeism, I refer to a movement that, on the positive side, is highly aware of racism and social injustice, and is galvanized toward raising awareness. On the negative side, it can be preachy, alienating, overly concerned with symbols and self-righteous.

The turning point for the fortunes of the woke may be this month's school board election in San Francisco, where three members were recalled by a margin of more than 70%. Voters were upset that the school board spent time trying to rename some schools in a more politically correct manner, rather than focusing on reopening all the schools. There was also considerable opposition to the board's introduction of a lottery admissions system for a prestigious high school, in lieu of the previous use of grades and exam scores.

San Francisco is and will likely remain one of the country's most left-leaning cities. And there could still be unforeseen consequences of the recall election. Still, it will serve as a reminder that even left-leaning voters can put up with only so much wokeism.

Another piece of evidence for the wane of wokeism is last year's gubernatorial election in Virginia. Virginia had become a blue state, opting for the Democratic candidate in the last four presidential elections. Now Virginia has a Republican governor, a Republican House and a Republican attorney general. Furthermore, Republicans ran and won on the education issue, in particular opposition to the teaching of so-called critical race theory.

Republicans also passed a bill, with partial Democratic support, that children cannot be forced to wear masks in public schools. While wokeism has not made masks an issue, in my experience the pro-woke view and the pro-mask view are highly correlated. Whatever your view on masks in the schools, this new law is a sign the woke are not in charge.

Looking forward, I still expect Virginia voters to opt for Democrats more often than Republicans, especially at the presidential level. But as in San Francisco, a message has been sent: Political posts are contestable, practical solutions come first, and the woke will not be entrusted with all institutions—especially the schools.

Another trend is how relatively few immigrants are woke. Latinos in particular seem more open to the Republican Party, or at least don't seem to have strong partisan attachments. More generally, immigrant political views are more diverse than many people think, even within the Democratic Party.

And what about the survival of Joe Rogan? There are a variety of reasons he is continuing his podcast with Spotify, even in light of some serious verbal transgressions. But the fact that he has not been canceled is another sign that the power of the woke has peaked.

Wokeism is likely to evolve into a subculture that is highly educated, highly white and fairly feminine. That is still a large mass of people, but not enough to run the country or all its major institutions. In the San Francisco school board recall, for instance, the role of Asian Americans was especially prominent.

By no means will the woke vanish from public life. They are entrenched in human resource departments, and fear of employment lawsuits will make it hard to dislodge their risk-averse procedures and pro-diversity rhetoric. The status quo for hiring practices, for better or worse, is now a permanent feature of American life.

The woke also are likely to achieve an even greater hold over American universities. Due to the tenure system, personnel turnover is low, and currently newer and younger faculty are more left-wing than are older faculty, including in my field of economics. The simple march of retirements is going to make universities even more left-wing—and even more out of touch with mainstream America.

Both the woke and their critics have been making the same fundamental mistake: assuming that their ideology, whether loved or hated, is a truly universal one. In fact, wokeism is a specific set of views stemming from ideological backgrounds which incorporate values that are Christian, Protestant, Puritan, Jewish, Enlightenment and, most of all, very American. Not that there's anything wrong with that, as Seinfeld used to say.

Modified versions of woke ideas will spread globally because there is so much real injustice in the world. Americans, meanwhile, need to get used to the idea that wokeism is just one part of a highly diverse mix—which is perhaps what the woke should have been wishing for all along.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

No to 57% but yes to research and education

The following is a statement by the Friends of the Mariana Trench and not NOAA Sanctuaries.

The Friends of the Mariana Trench were asked to respond to claims that we are trying to close 57% of the exclusive economic zone around the CNMI. It's not true. The Friends are focused on research and education. We are happy to share our 3-Year Strategic Plan where you can see our priorities. If you want to learn more, visit our website (www.friendsmarianatrench.org), message us on WhatsApp (670-483-3668), or send us an email (info@friendsmarianatrench.org) with your concerns and we will happily provide you with any information available to us.

The current public comment period for the nomination in NOAA's inventory is to identify whether there are any changes to the 11-criterion set forth by NOAA Sanctuaries. The Friends asked a Chamorro marine science Ph.D. candidate to look at the science completed around the Mariana Trench since 2009. The findings are significant and deserve to be considered for additional research opportunities. The Friends are not proposing any closures to indigenous access with the EEZ nor changes to existing fishing regulations. We do, however, believe that the proposal supported by Gov. Torres and Delegate Kilili accepted by the NOAA Sanctuaries Office in 2017 should remain on the inventory list for future possible designation, which would bring ocean and marine science research and education resources to the people of the Marianas.

We believe in the preservation of our culture. Our people have always lived off our lands and waters. We have always understood that the land and ocean can provide sustenance for our families. It is our honor to perpetuate this legacy. We want our children to inherit abundance and we believe that conservation management of our resources done correctly can provide for them indefinitely. We believe in providing support to allow traditional knowledge to coexist with Western-style research and the recording of research science findings. Through this model, we can share our knowledge and translate culture into research outcomes which will, in turn, provide our youth with the skills to maintain the gifts that our islands have provided to us for generations. We believe that science and research can be beneficial in helping us to carry our best practices forward.

We request that NOAA Sanctuaries keep the Mariana Trench nomination in the NOAA Sanctuaries inventory. Moreover, we look forward to participating in the designation process, should it occur at some point in the future. The following points are of utmost importance:

· Our geographical location is unique; however, our indigenous scientists' capacity in our own home is limited. We want to see support for our people to practice science for our people and community.

· Our people have practiced conservation for 3,000 years. Revitalization of traditional practices in support of our livelihood is prime.

· We are passionate about blending our traditional practices with Western-style science research to effectively manage our natural resources now and for our future generations.

· It is imperative that the people of the Marianas will be given equal co-management of any federally designated sanctuary spaces.

· Equally imperative is that the sanctuary designation is not a decision between governments but is a community-developed conservation space.

· We do not have any substantive changes to recommend for the nomination, but we do believe that the community should make any decisions that involve fishing and that the federal government should honor this. We support fishermen/women in our community who want to maintain access and fishing rights

· We strongly believe that the sanctuary name should be changed to reflect our indigenous peoples and not those who have colonized our islands over the last 500 years. ***(PR)***

BEST

From Page 8

robust NATO posture facing Russia. So he's managed to create his own nightmare in pursuing this course of action."

The revitalization of NATO comes after frequent disdain for the alliance from former President Donald Trump—and after Biden failed to fully consider the perspectives of allies in executing the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. Biden, who ran as an experienced statesman, should not have had to learn from that military and moral failure. But it's good that he seems to have heeded the lessons and led better through this crisis.

That's no guarantee of success, as Biden himself acknowledged. But unlike in Afghanistan, the president pledged that the country would be prepared "no matter what happens.

"We are ready with diplomacy—to be engaged in diplomacy with Russia and our allies and partners to improve stability and security in Europe as a whole. And we are ready to respond decisively to a Russian attack on Ukraine, which is still very much a possibility."

A possibility, yes, but not yet a certainty, in part because of the preparation. The goal must be to push Putin to negotiate legitimate security issues instead of invading Ukraine and starting what Biden rightly called a "war of choice," not a "war of necessity."

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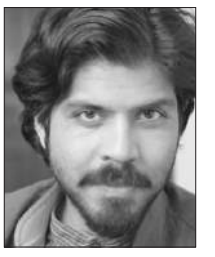
To beat the demagogues, don't play their games



By PANKAJ MISHRA
Bloomberg Opinion

Pankaj Mishra is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist. His books include* Age of Anger: A History of the Present, From the Ruins of Empire: The Intellectuals Who Remade Asia, *and* Temptations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet and Beyond.

Recent weeks have confirmed that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson poses a dire risk to the moral health of U.K. society. His canard, borrowed from far-right conspiracists, that Labour Party leader Keir Starmer failed in his previous role as prosecutor to put a notorious pedophile behind bars prompted a mob to assault Starmer in the street. London's Metropolitan Police are now investigating death threats against him.

Commentators are aghast that Tory members of Parliament have not replaced Johnson with a leader less inclined to incite violence. Even former Conservative Prime Minister John Major recently complained that the party's "reputation is being shredded" as Johnson forces his colleagues to "defend the indefensible" and asks the public "to believe the unbelievable."

Together with Republicans in the United States and members of India's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, Britain's Tories are indeed traveling to a very dark place. Yet it's not enough to blame these once-respectable right-wing parties for going rogue. The truth is that their decision to stand behind leaders such as Johnson, former U.S. President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflect a sinister shift in public sentiment.

Arguably, a sizable share of the electorates in the U.K., U.S. and India no longer minds, and indeed enjoys, the flagrant violation of political and ethical norms by their leaders.

Certainly, those voters ignored too many abysmal facts when electing such men in the first place. Modi was trailed on his way to high political office by accusations that he condoned a massacre of Muslims under his watch in 2002. Trump and Johnson had made careers out of broadcasting falsehoods about a range of issues, from former U.S. President Barack Obama's birthplace to the European Union. Indeed, Johnson was fired from his job at the Times of London for dishonesty.

Nor do their supporters show any signs of abandoning these leaders because they've registered mixed records in office. Brexit, achieved through a mendacious campaign, has brought no tangible benefits to the United Kingdom. The Indian economy was foundering even before Modi's mismanagement of the pandemic made it worse. The damage inflicted by Trump's presidency on U.S. institutions is too well-known to be recounted.

Much political discourse relies upon the expectation that politicians will be rewarded or punished for how effectively they advance the interests of those who vote for them. What the persistence of Johnson, Trump and Modi confirms once again is that passions have become far more politically consequential than interests.

The most potent of these passions is fear. Mostly groundless but deftly manipulated, the fear of "replacement" by darker-skinned populations, of being outbred by Muslims, of being left behind by immigrants stealing jobs and of being emasculated by women has come to determine many people's choice of political party.

These voters like their political representatives more if they offer a wide range of contemporary figures to loathe. Among the most satisfactory targets are upstart minorities and arrogant metropolitan elites who have profaned cherished national icons with their radical iconoclasm.

The key to the resilience of Johnson and his peers lies in their mastery of this highly emotive, wholly irrational but fruitful political discourse. Their aggressive campaigns—against minorities and leftists and liberals, or such bogeys as Critical Race Theory—have reshaped how we understand and conduct political life.

This trend is not irreversible. Destructive passions fade over time, after all, and faster if there are viable visions of material improvement on offer in politics. But those critics of demagogues who seek to deploy prevailing sentiments to their short-term ends are making the situation worse.

In Britain, Starmer has taken to emphasizing his anti-woke and pro-Brexit credentials in order to woo hard-line Tory voters to his party. He would grow his political capital a lot more quickly if he promised to reverse what is increasingly the most unpopular aspect of Brexit: the exit, enforced by Johnson, from the European single market, which has led to high import costs, export barriers, shortages of food and rising energy costs.

Likewise, India's opposition Congress party could stop presenting itself as the civilized face of Hinduism and focus on Modi's numerous fiascoes as an administrator. The Democrats ought to cease mimicking the Republican obsession with "wokeness" and make faster progress to reverse Trump-era policies against immigration that, together with the pandemic, have helped slow down the U.S. economy.

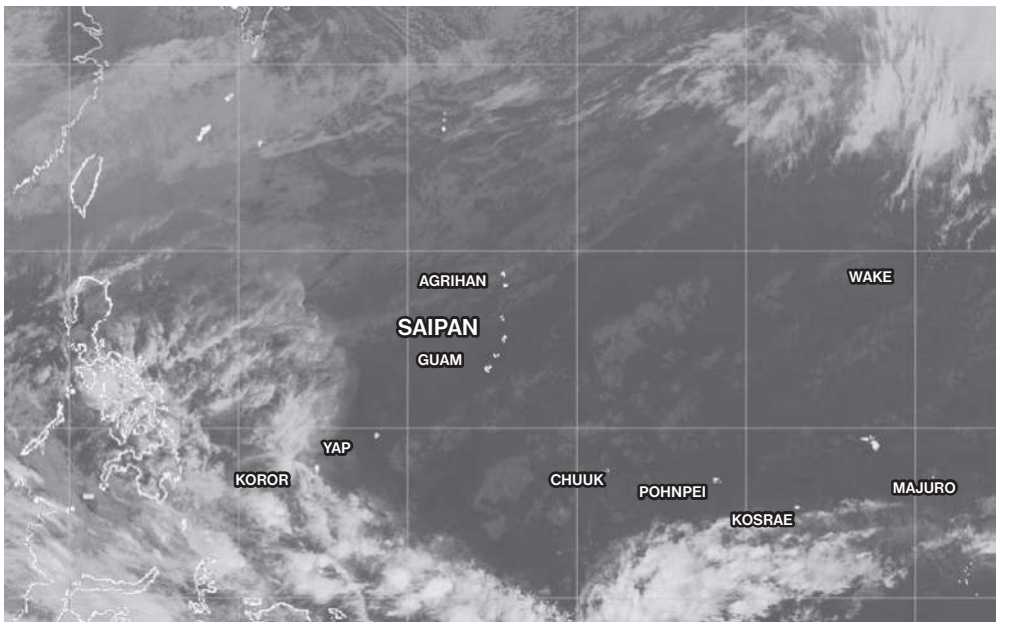
Economic interests may not be as viscerally appealing as the satisfactions of hating something or other. But a political life determined largely by passions stoked by demagogues will not only keep Johnson, Modi and Trump strong; it will consume what remains of democracy in its three former strongholds.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 76º	85º 76	85º 76º	85º 76º	85º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:15 AM, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Another quiet morning for the Marianas, with partly cloudy skies, isolated showers and moderate northeast winds. Seas range from just over 8 feet at Ritidian to 6-7 feet at Ipan to 4-5 feet at the Asan temporary buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	AM Thunderstorms/Wind	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms/Win	29 / 26 °F
Yap	PM Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	AM Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Isolated Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:38 AM	18:22 PM
Wednesday	06:38 AM	18:23 PM
Thursday	06:37 AM	18:23 PM
Friday	06:37 AM	18:23 PM
Saturday	06:36 AM	18:23 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	10:21 PM	23:20 PM
Wednesday	-	11:06 PM	-
Thursday	00:20	11:55 PM	-
Friday	01:22	12:51 PM	-
Saturday	02:26	13:51 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	AM Showers	25 / 17 °F
Beijing	Sunny	4 / -8 °F
Hong Kong	Rain	11 / 9 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	27 / 21 °F
London	Light Rain	13 / 2 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	15 / 5 °F
Manila	Scattered Thunderstorms	31 / 25°F
Melbourne	Sunny	24 / 15 °F
Miami	Mostly Sunny	25 / 22 °F
New York	Rain	14 / 11 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	7 / 0 °F
Paris	PM Light Rain	6 / -4°F
Busan	Mostly Sunny	9 / -2 °F
Rome	Sunny	16 / 2 °F
Salem	Rain	16 / 12 °F
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	11 / 5 °F
Seoul	Mostly Clear	0 / 12 °F
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	9 / -1°F
Washington, DC	Rain	17 / 16°F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
11:06 PM	High Tide	1.53
05:12 AM	Low Tide	0.52
11:16 AM	High Tide	1.77
6:12 PM	Low Tide	0.20

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

Australia welcomes back tourists with toy koalas, Tim Tams

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—International tourists and business travelers began arriving in Australia with few restrictions on Monday for the first time in almost two years after the government lifted some of the most draconian pandemic measures of any democracy in the world.

Vaccinated travelers were greeted at Sydney's airport by jubilant well-wishers waving toy koalas and favorite Australian foods including Tim Tams chocolate cookies and jars of Vegemite spread.

Federal Tourism Minister Dan Tehan was on hand to welcome the first arrivals on a Qantas flight from Los Angeles which landed at 6.20 a.m. local time.

"I think there'll be a very strong rebound in our tourism market. Our wonderful experiences haven't gone away," Tehan told Australian Broadcasting Corp. television.

AP

Passengers are welcomed as they arrive at Sydney International Airport in Sydney, Monday, Feb. 21, 2022.

Home Affairs Minister Karen Andrews said all travelers' vaccination status would be checked before they arrived to avoid a repeat of Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic's visa debacle.

Djokovic was issued with a visa through an automated process before he left Spain to compete in the Australian Open in January but was deported after he arrived in Melbourne because he was not vaccinated against COVID-19.

Tourism Australia managing director Phillipa Harrison said she expected tourist numbers would take two years to rebound to pre-pandemic levels.

"This is a really great start," Harrison said. "This is what the industry had been asking us for, you know, just give us our international guests back and we will take it from there"

Qantas on Monday was bringing in passengers from eight overseas destinations including Vancouver, Singapore, London, and Delhi.

The Sydney-based airline's chief executive Alan Joyce said bookings had been strong since the federal government two weeks ago that the country was relaxing restrictions.

"It has been tough two years for everybody in the tourism industry, but today is really one of the big steps on the way back to a full recovery so we are very excited about today," Joyce told Nine Network television.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said 1.2 million people had visas to enter Australia with 56 international flights due touch down in the first 24 hours of the border reopening.

Australia imposed some of the world's toughest travel restrictions on its citizens and permanent residents in March 2020 to prevent them from bringing COVID-19 home.

Rents reach 'insane' levels across US with no end in sight

By R.J. RICO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Krystal Guerra's Miami apartment has a tiny kitchen, cracked tiles, warped cabinets, no dishwasher and hardly any storage space.

But Guerra was fine with the apartment's shortcomings. It was all part of being a 32-year-old graduate student in South Florida, she reasoned, and she was happy to live there for a few more years as she finished her marketing degree.

That was until a new owner bought the property and told her he was raising the rent from $1,550 to $1,950, a 26% increase that Guerra said meant her rent would account for the majority of her take-home pay from the University of Miami.

"I thought that was insane," said Guerra, who decided to move out. "Am I supposed to stop paying for everything else I have going on in my life just so I can pay rent? That's unsustainable."

Guerra is hardly alone. Rents have exploded across the country, causing many to dig deep into their savings, downsize to subpar units or fall behind on payments and risk eviction now that a federal moratorium has ended.

In the 50 largest U.S. metro areas, median rent rose an astounding 19.3% from December 2020 to December 2021, according to a Realtor.com analysis of properties with two or fewer bedrooms. And nowhere was the jump bigger than in the Miami metro area, where the median rent exploded to $2,850, 49.8% higher than the previous year.

Other cities across Florida—Tampa, Orlando and Jacksonville—and the Sun Belt destinations of San Diego, Las Vegas, Austin, Texas, and Memphis, Tennessee, all saw spikes of more than 25% during that time period.

Rising rents are an increasing driver of high inflation that has become one of the nation's top economic problems. Labor Department data, which covers existing rents as well as new listings, shows much smaller increases, but these are also picking up. Rental costs rose 0.5% in January from December, the Labor Department said last week. That may seem small, but it was the biggest increase in 20 years, and will likely accelerate.

Economists worry about the impact of rent increases on inflation because the big jumps in new leases feed into the U.S. consumer price index, which is used to measure inflation.

Inflation jumped 7.5% in January from a year earlier, the biggest increase in four decades. While many economists expect that to decrease as pandemic-disrupted supply chains unravel, rising rents could keep inflation high through the end of the year since housing costs make up one-third of the consumer price index.

Huge opal sells for nearly $144,000 at Alaska auction

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—A gemstone, billed as one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence, was sold for $143,750 at auction in Alaska on Sunday.

The opal, dubbed the "Americus Australis," weighs more than 11,800 carats, according to the auction house Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals. It also has a long history.

Most recently, it was kept in a linen closet in a home in Big Lake, north of Anchorage, by Fred von Brandt, who mines for gold in Alaska and whose family has deep roots in the gem and rock business.

The opal is larger than a brick and is broken into two pieces, which von Brandt said was a practice used decades ago to prove gem quality.

Von Brandt said the stone has been in his family since the late 1950s, when his grandfather bought it from an Australian opal dealer named John Altmann.

AP

This photo provided by Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals shows an opal specimen, Dec. 20, 2021.

Von Brandt said the opal for decades was in the care of his father, Guy von Brandt, who decided it had been "locked up long enough, that it's time to put it back out in the world and see what interest it can generate."

"He entrusted me to figure out which direction we wanted to go to part with the stone," von Brandt told The Associated Press.

The family, with roots in California, exhibited the stone at gem shows for years, until the early 1980s, he said. His father then branched out into furniture and displayed it at his shop. Guy von Brandt eventually moved to Oregon and kept the stone "kind of tucked away" for many years, von Brandt said.

Von Brandt said he brought it with him to Alaska over a year ago as he weighed the best approach to a possible sale. He said he went with Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals because he thought it would get more attention from the newer company than a larger auction house. The sale is set for Sunday.

Nick Cline, a partner and appraisal specialist with Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals, said the family has documentation surrounding the provenance of the opal. As part of his research, he contacted Fiona Altmann, granddaughter of John Altmann and general manager of Altmann + Cherny in Sydney, Australia.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff's sister, husband found dead

BOYNTON BEACH, Fla. (AP)—The sister of Wall Street fraudster Bernie Madoff and her husband were found dead in what investigators said was an apparent murder-suicide in Florida, according to news reports. The Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office on Sunday identified the couple as 87-year-old Sondra Wiener of Boynton Beach and her 90-year-old husband, Marvin. They were found unresponsive with gunshot wounds Thursday afternoon inside their residence. "Detectives from the Violent Crimes Division arrived on scene to investigate further. After further investigation it appears to be a murder/suicide," the Sheriff's Office statement said. Officials said the cause of death will be determined by the Medical Examiner's Office.

Leak gives details on over 30,000 Credit Suisse bank clients

BERLIN (AP)—A German newspaper and other media on Sunday said a leak of data from Credit Suisse, Switzerland's second-biggest bank, reveals details of the accounts of more than 30,000 clients—some of them unsavory—and points to possible failures of due diligence in checks on many customers. Credit Suisse said in a statement that it "strongly rejects the allegations and insinuations about the bank's purported business practices." The German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung said it received the data anonymously through a secure digital mailbox over a year ago. It said it's unclear whether the source was an individual or a group, and the newspaper didn't make any payment or promises. The newspaper said it evaluated the data, which ranged from the 1940s until well into the last decade, along with the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and dozens of media partners including The New York Times and The Guardian.

Investor pushes McDonald's to change the way it buys pork

CHICAGO (AP)—An activist investor is trying to make McDonald's change the way it buys pork for its bacon cheeseburgers and sausage patties. Investor Carl Icahn has nominated two new candidates for McDonald's board of directors, the fast food chain confirmed Sunday. The issue Icahn wants to change is that some of McDonald's pork suppliers confine pregnant pigs in small crates. McDonald's vowed a decade ago to phase out using pork from suppliers who use such crates. The fast food giant said Sunday it expects to source 85 to 90% of its U.S. pork from pigs not housed in gestation crates during pregnancy by the end of this year. Icahn's nominees will stand for election at McDonald's 2022 annual meeting, the company said.

Nation

US virus cases, hospitalizations continue steady decline

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and JONATHAN MATTISE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Average daily COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are continuing to fall in the U.S., an indicator that the omicron variant's hold is weakening across the country.

Total confirmed cases reported Saturday barely exceeded 100,000, a sharp downturn from around 800,850 five weeks ago on Jan. 16, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

In New York, the number of cases went down by more than 50% over the last two weeks.

"I think what's influencing the decline, of course, is that omicron is starting to run out of people to infect," said Dr. Thomas Russo, professor and infectious disease chief at the University of Buffalo's Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

COVID-19 hospitalizations are down from a national seven-day average of 146,534 on Jan. 20 to 80,185 the week ending in Feb 13, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID data tracker.

Public health experts say they are feeling hopeful that more declines are ahead and that the country is shifting from being in a pandemic to an 'endemic' that is more consistent and predictable. However, many expressed concern that vaccine uptick in the U.S. has still been below expectations, concerns that are exacerbated by the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

Dr. William Schaffner of Vanderbilt University's School of Medicine said Sunday that the downturn in case numbers and hospitalizations is encouraging. He agreed that it likely has a lot to do with herd immunity.

"There are two sides to omicron's coin," he said. "The bad thing is that it can spread to a lot of people and make them mildly ill. The good thing is it can spread to a lot of people and make them mildly ill, because in doing so, it has created a lot of natural immunity."

However, Schaffner said it's much too early to "raise the banner of mission accomplished." As a public health expert, he said he'll be more comfortable if the decline sustains itself for another month or two.

"If I have a concern, it's that taking off the interventions, the restrictions, may be happening with a bit more enthusiasm and speed than makes me comfortable," he said. "My own little adage is, better to wear the mask for a month too long, than to take the mask off a month too soon and all of a sudden get another surge."

Officials in many states are cutting back on restrictions, saying they are moving away from treating the coronavirus pandemic as a public health crisis and instead shifting to policy focused on prevention.

During a Friday news conference, Utah Gov. Spencer Cox announced that the state would be transitioning into what he called a "steady state" model starting in April in which Utah will close mass testing sites, report COVID-19 case counts on a more infrequent basis and advise residents to make personal choices to manage the risk of contracting the virus.

"Now, let me be clear, this is not the end of COVID, but it is the end—or rather the beginning—of treating COVID as we do other seasonal respiratory viruses," the Republican said.

Also on Friday, Boston lifted the city's proof of vaccine policy, which required patrons and staff of indoor spaces to show proof of vaccination.

"This news highlights the progress we've made in our fight against Covid-19 thanks to vaccines & boosters," Boston Mayor Michelle Wu said via Twitter.

Dr. Amy Gordon Bono, a Nashville primary care physician, said now is not the time to lessen vaccination efforts, but to double down on them. In the spring of 2021 when vaccines were becoming more readily available, the U.S. was "eager to declare COVID independence," she said. Then came the delta and omicron surges.

Bono, who attended medical school at Tulane University in New Orleans, said the U.S. should approach COVID like hurricane season.

"You have to learn to live with COVID and you have to learn from it," she said.

One challenge is that each region has a unique landscape, she said. In the American South, for example, many restrictions have been lifted for a while or never existed in the first place. Yet it's also a region with relatively lower vaccination rates.

"We've suffered so much and if there's a way to help appease future suffering, it's having a more vaccinated community," she said.

In Buffalo, Russo said he sees two possible future outcomes. In one, the U.S. experiences a fairly quiet spring and summer while immunity is still strong. He said in that scenario, it's likely immunity will wane and there will be a bump of new cases in the cooler months during flu season, but hopefully not a severe surge.

In the second—the one concerning public health experts—a new variant evolves and evades the immunity wall that was built up from both omicron infections and vaccinations.

1 police officer dead, 1 hurt in offshore helicopter crash

AP

A crane is used to lift a Huntington Beach Police helicopter out of the water in Newport Beach, Calif., Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022.

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (AP)—Authorities were investigating Sunday the cause of a police helicopter crash along the Southern California coast that killed one officer and sent another to the hospital with critical injuries.

The Huntington Beach officers were responding to a disturbance in the neighboring city of Newport Beach around 6:30 p.m. Saturday when the helicopter hit a narrow strip of water between Lido Isle and the Balboa Peninsula. Witnesses said boaters rushed to pull the officers out of the helicopter, which landed upside down in shallow water.

Nicholas Vella, 44, a 14-year veteran with the police department, died in the crash, Police Chief Eric Parra said at a Saturday night news conference. He leaves behind behind a wife and daughter.

Word of his death drew dozens of officers and first responders, who formed a line outside the hospital to salute his casket as it was escorted by squad cars to the Orange County coroner's office.

Vella "was truly dedicated to his job and was doing what he loved doing," the chief said.

"This is a difficult night for all of us and I would ask for your prayers and support as we support our officers' families."

The second officer, who is a 16-year veteran with the department, was released from the hospital Sunday "but there's still a lot of recovery ahead," police spokeswoman Jennifer Carey told the Orange County Register.

It wasn't immediately clear who was the pilot.

The National Transportation Safety Board and the Orange County Sheriff's Department are investigating the crash.

A witness told KCAL-TV he saw the helicopter struggling moments before the crash.

"We were driving over here and we heard the pitch of the helicopter and it sounded like the helicopter was in distress," said the witness, who spoke to the station on condition of anonymity. "When we looked at the helicopter it was out of control. It was obvious the helicopter was gonna go down. It did go down, and almost immediately sunk."

California tribe confronts crisis of missing, murdered women

YUROK RESERVATION, Calif. (AP)—The young mother had behaved erratically for months, hitchhiking and wandering naked through two Native American reservations and a small town clustered along Northern California's rugged Lost Coast.

But things escalated when Emmilee Risling was charged with arson for igniting a fire in a cemetery. Her family hoped the case would force her into mental health and addiction services. Instead, she was released over the pleas of loved ones and a tribal police chief.

The 33-year-old college graduate—an accomplished traditional dancer with ancestry from three area tribes—was last seen soon after walking across a bridge in a remote sliver of the Yurok Reservation.

Her October disappearance is one of five instances in the past 18 months where Indigenous women have gone missing or been killed in this isolated expanse of coastline between San Francisco and Oregon. The crisis has prompted the Yurok Tribe to declare a state of emergency and brought increased urgency to efforts to build the first comprehensive database of such cases in California.

"Just in this last year, I knew three of the women who have gone missing or were murdered—and we shared so much in common," said Blythe George, a Yurok citizen and assistant sociology professor helping document the problem. "You can't help but see yourself in those people."

The recent cases spotlight an epidemic that is difficult to quantify but has long disproportionately plagued Native Americans.

A 2021 report by a government watchdog group found the true number of missing and murdered Indigenous women is unknown due to reporting problems, distrust of law enforcement and jurisdictional conflicts. But Native American women face murder rates almost three times those of white women overall—and up to 10 times the national average in certain locations, according to a 2021 summary of research by the National Congress of American Indians. More than 80% have experienced violence.

Emmilee is an enrolled Hoopa Valley tribal member who traces her ancestry to the Yurok and Karuk nations.

AP

Mary Risling stands near a photo of her missing sister, Emmilee Risling, at the family home on Jan. 21, 2022, in McKinleyville, Calif.

World

US says Russia closer to invading Ukraine, agrees to meeting

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Russia on Sunday rescinded earlier pledges to pull tens of thousands of its troops back from Ukraine's northern border, a move that U.S. leaders said put Russia another step closer to what they said was the planned invasion of Ukraine. Residents of Ukraine's capital filled a gold-domed cathedral to pray for peace.

Russia's action extends what it said were military exercises, originally set to end Sunday, that brought an estimated 30,000 Russian forces to Belarus, Ukraine's neighbor to the north. They are among at least 150,000 Russian troops now deployed outside Ukraine's borders, along with tanks, warplanes, artillery and other war materiel.

The continued deployment of the Russian forces in Belarus raised concern that Russia could send those troops to sweep down on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, a city of about 3 million people less than a three-hour drive away.

In what appeared to be a last-ditch diplomatic gambit brokered with the aid of French President Emmanuel Macron, the White House said U.S. President Joe Biden has agreed "in principle" to a meeting with Russia's President Vladimir Putin as long as he holds off on launching an assault that U.S. officials warn appears increasingly more likely.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the administration has been clear that "we are committed to pursuing diplomacy until the moment an invasion begins." U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov are set to meet on Thursday in Europe—as long as Russia does not send its troops into Ukraine beforehand.

"We are always ready for diplomacy. We are also ready to impose swift and severe consequences should Russia instead choose war," Psaki said in statement. "And currently, Russia appears to be continuing preparations for a full-scale assault on Ukraine very soon."

In Kyiv, life outwardly continued as usual for many on a mild winter Sunday, with brunches and church services, ahead of what Biden said late last week was an already decided-upon Russian attack.

Katerina Spanchak, who fled a region of eastern Ukraine when it was taken over by Russian-allied separatists, was among worshippers crowded into the capital's St. Michael's monastery, smoky with the candles burned by the faithful, to pray that Ukraine be spared.

"We all love life, and we are all united by our love of life," Spanchak said, pausing to compose herself. "We should appreciate it every day. That's why I think everything will be fine."

"Our joint prayers will help to elude this tragedy, which is advancing," said another worshipper, who identified himself only by his first name, Oleh.

A U.S. official said Sunday that Biden's assertion that Putin has made the decision to roll Russian forces into Ukraine was based on intelligence that Russian front-line commanders have been given orders to begin final preparations for an attack. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the sensitive intelligence.

AP

Ukrainian police officers march past a woman begging for alms during a demonstration in Odessa, Ukraine, Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022.

UK: People with COVID in England won't need to self-isolate

LONDON (AP)—People with COVID-19 won't be legally required to self-isolate in England starting in the coming week, the U.K. government has announced, as part of a plan for "living with COVID" that is also likely to see testing for the coronavirus scaled back.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said ending all of the legal restrictions brought in to curb the spread of the virus will let people in the U.K. "protect ourselves without restricting our freedoms." He is expected to lay out details of the plan in Parliament on Monday.

"I'm not saying that we should throw caution to the winds, but now is the moment for everybody to get their confidence back," Johnson told the BBC in an interview broadcast Sunday.

"We've reached a stage where we think you can shift the balance away from state mandation, away from banning certain courses of action, compelling certain courses of action, in favor of encouraging personal responsibility."

But some of the government's scientific advisers said it was a risky move that could bring a surge in infections and weaken the country's defenses against more virulent future strains.

Wes Streeting, health spokesman for the main opposition Labour Party, accused Johnson of "declaring victory before the war is over."

A reminder that the coronavirus remains widespread came with the news that Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday. Buckingham Palace said the 95-year-old monarch was experiencing mild, cold-like symptoms.

Johnson's Conservative government lifted most virus restrictions in January, scrapping vaccine passports for venues and ending mask mandates in most settings apart from hospitals in England. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which set their own public health rules, also have opened up, although more slowly.

A combination of high vaccination rates in the U.K. and the milder omicron variant means easing restrictions didn't lead to a surge in hospitalizations and deaths. Both are falling, though the U.K. still has Europe's highest coronavirus toll after Russia, with more than 160,000 recorded deaths.

Survivor and body found on burning ferry off Greek island

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Greek emergency workers rescued a Belarussian truck driver Sunday from a burning ferry off the island of Corfu and found the body of a Greek truck driver as they combed the wreckage for missing passengers. The discoveries left 10 people still unaccounted for.

The survivor, 21, was able to make his way up to the left rear deck on his own, and told rescue workers he heard other voices below.

"The fact that this man succeeded, despite adverse conditions, to exit into the deck and alert the coast guard ... gives us hope that there may be other (survivors)," coast guard spokesman Nikos Alexiou told state broadcaster ERT.

The victim was identified as a 58-year-old Greek truck driver by his family.

The Italian-owned Euroferry Olympia, which was carrying more than 290 passengers and crew as well as 153 trucks and 32 cars, caught fire Friday, three hours after it left the northwestern Greek port of Igoumenitsa bound for Brindisi in Italy. The company that operates the ferry said the fire started in a hold where vehicles were parked.

The Greek coast guard and other boats evacuated about 280 people from the ferry to the nearby island of Corfu.

The ferry has been towed to the port of Kassiopi, in northeastern Corfu. Firefighters were still battling the blaze in spots Sunday and a thick smoke still blanketed the ship.

DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT
†Day Sharry Suda
Lovingly known as "Mama Day"
Born to life on April 28, 1947
Called to Eternal life on February 11, 2022
In her new Life, Day will be met at the gates of Heaven by her:
Mother: †Nora Aisek
Father: †Sanou Sharry
Husband: †Sirocho Suda
Granddaughter: †Traina S. Jack
Grandson: †Derek S. Taman
Her loving memories will forever live in the hearts of her:
Children:
Sinos Suda
Sintosy/Recky J. Suda (Roxy S./Rayner Sekool [Rayner David, Dominic, Debrajoi Diane]), Roxanne S./Stazz Jr. Tammy [Jonathan Daisiro, Stuart, Lester, Rylie], Nicky)
Hopeness Suda/Justina Hartman (Dexter, Dickson, Dikreen)
Daisy S./Randy Taman (Randy Jr., Jason, John)
Daisina Suda/Ricky Sounena (Corina Mae [Caesar Kingston, Amaya Rose], Corey)
Sireko Suda
Neinam S./Jack Hartman (Jasmine, Jadee, Jayleen, JJ, Jaylast)
Helper/Elizabeth Suda (Alice Ann, Anthony, Ikeson, Ian, Kyzer)
Soichiro/Tana Suda
Tracy S./Pitness Moses (Cathreen, Brandon Lee, Dayreen, Jovinia, Kianna)
Edwin/Anrine Suda (Eddieson, Batson, Dayleen, Aned, Edson, Nate)
Linda Suda/Atenson Fritz (Sinbad)
She will be missed by numerous brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends.
On Wednesday, February 23, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. our beloved Mama Day will be escorted from the CHCC Morgue to her home in Upper MIHA Housing (M3), Garapan for viewing and last respects.
On Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., our beloved Mama Day will be escorted from her home to the Tanapag Public Cemetery where she will be laid to rest in peace and love.
Your thoughts, prayers, words of comfort and presence are sincerely appreciated.
Sharry - Suda Family

Overdrive

Pickups show how Toyota, Detroit Three differ on electrification

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

Toyota is from Mars, Detroit automakers are from Venus.

Toyota, America's best-selling brand in 2021, makes rugged trucks in Texas for American buyers. But it has always pursued a more retail-focused strategy than Motor City truckmakers who split their attention between retail and commercial fleet buyers.

As the federal government tries to force automakers to make EVs over the next decade, that truck strategy is diverging even further as the 2022 Toyota Tundra sidesteps fully electric trucks for retail buyer-preferred hybrid powertrains while General Motors Co. and Ford Motor Co. build battery-powered Silverado EV and F-150 Lightning pickups for their retail and commercial fleet customers.

The Toyota and the Detroit Three plans are case studies in how big automakers plan to keep both their customer and government constituencies happy. Where Toyota Motor Corp. sees volume sales—and resulting regulatory compliance—in its hybrid SUV and sedan offerings, GM and Ford see customer volume in their fleet truck sales.

"Our focus was towing—the vast majority of Tundra owners tow," said Toyota marketing manager Joe Moses at the Tundra i-Force MAX hybrid's media test in California. "So the priority was torque. We have a nice place with active recreation consumers. They're out towing things, riding motorcycles, on ATVs, going fishing. We found that's the place where we've been successful, and that's where we'll continue to play."

As with buyers of its best-selling RAV4 compact SUV and Camry sedan hybrids, Toyota found its retail customers didn't want fully electric trucks, which, despite their impressive low-end torque, have poor range—especially when towing. Real-world tests by TFLTrucks.com have found that EVs lose about 70% of range when towing.

With a 32.2-gallon fuel tank and EPA highway rating of 22 mpg, the Tundra has a range of just over 700 miles. By comparison, the F-150 Lightning's range tops out at 300 miles.

Toyota expects 25% of its pickup sales to be hybrid—similar to the percentage of electrified vehicle sales (gas-hybrid, plug-in and hydrogen fuel cell) in 2021 for the rest of its model lineup, led by the RAV4 and Camry. Toyota sold 583,697 vehicles in 2021 equipped with a battery of some kind.

Those sales, analysts say, also will help Toyota meet its mpg regulatory compliance goals as the EPA ratchets up fuel economy standards in coming years.

"Toyota is smart to do what they are doing," iSeeCars.com auto analyst Karl Brauer said. "Toyota is focused on making vehicles that will sell to today's customers, while watching how EV demand develops. Maybe they are wrong, but they haven't gotten much wrong in the last 50 years and they just sold more vehicles in the U.S. in 2021 than anyone else."

GM and Ford, by contrast, are making bold bets that consumers will make a quick shift to EVs. GM says that its lineup will be exclusively EV by 2035 and has abandoned hybrid vehicles to make big investments in all-electric skateboard chassis. Ford is investing heavily in EVs as well but is also bullish on gas-hybrids with its Escape Hybrid and Lincoln Corsair and Aviator plug-in models.

Like Toyota, say analysts, the Detroit automakers are playing to their strength: truck market dominance. Together, they hold more than 90% of the U.S. full-size pickup market.

While GM and Ford have struggled to sell hybrids on the same scale as their Japanese rival, they have a stranglehold on the U.S. commercial fleet pickup and delivery van markets. The Detroit manufacturers see big opportunities for EVs there.

At her recent address to the Consumer Electronics Show touting the General's zero-emission future, CEO Mary Barra highlighted demand from corporate customers for electric BrightDrop vans. Walmart has signed an agreement with the Detroit maker to buy 5,000 BrightDrop vans, while FedEx (BrightDrop's first customer) is already taking delivery of 500 vehicles with more expected to come.

"It's sexy to talk about retail electric vehicles, but there is actually so much opportunity in the fleet market," said Ed Kim, industry analyst with Auto Pacific. "Fleet vehicles can run fixed routes of 150 miles on a smaller, cheaper battery. Then they can charge overnight on cheaper utility rates. With Congress's proposed $12,500 in incentives, a Ford Lightning EV, for example, can make up its purchase premium over a gas-powered F-150 of about $10,000."

Ford is bullish on selling the Lightning to fleet consumers while GM sees its BrightDrop van demand translating to the pickup market. Indeed, the fleet-focused Work Truck version of the Silverado EV will beat the retail version to market in early 2023.

"That's the beauty of pickups," continued Kim. "They can sell a variety of flavors to fleet and high-end retail customers. Chevrolet is launching a work truck, but also a loaded, $105,000 Silverado EV."

The Detroit Three will continue to build diesel pickups for the heavy and light-duty markets given their superior towing capability and mpg numbers. But heavy-duty trucks will soon lose their federal exemption from mpg regulations—and will become tougher to make just as diesels have become expensive to engineer in the light-duty market.

"I wanted a diesel engine (for the Tundra). We're using a brand-new diesel engine overseas; it's fabulous," said Tundra chief engineer Mike Swears in California. "But diesels in North America are very difficult to certify now and demand for diesel is going down. The (emissions) after-treatment system is about $3,000 added to the cost of the engine. So in comes the hybrid."

Chevy, Ford and Ram light-duty diesels get 20% better fuel efficiency than Toyota's Tundra. But given the regulatory climate, Toyota's Moses says the hybrid's dexterity makes it attractive to truck owners just as hybrids have sold well to SUV and sedan owners.

"There are things about diesel that we wanted to make sure that we delivered in our" hybrid, said the marketing chief. "The torque and power is the most important thing. As we evaluated the different options, what we were able to do with this new hybrid system was deliver on more horsepower, more torque and more mpg off of the outgoing V-8 engine."

Whatever their electrification strategy, the American and Japanese pickups will cost you. Trucks have become the new luxury vehicles with stratospheric sticker prices. Top Lightning and Silverado EV trims will push $100K. With the Tundra Hybrid, Toyota is introducing a new Capstone model starting at 75 grand.

"We've continued to see the consumer transaction price in full-size pickups go up. Some of it is around the towing technology, a lot of it the advancement in tech," Moses said. "Consumers aren't just looking at a basic truck—(they) want a truck that can do everything, but with all the amenities, too."

And will Toyota develop an electric pickup?

"It goes back to the priority about towing," he said. "We'll continue to watch the market."

FORD MOTOR CO./TNS
Ford is bullish on selling the F-150 Lightning to fleet consumers.

The 2022

Life & Style

Queen Elizabeth II tests positive for COVID; mild symptoms

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday and is experiencing mild, cold-like symptoms, Buckingham Palace said, adding that she still plans to carry on working. The diagnosis prompted concern and get-well wishes from across Britain's political spectrum for the famously stoic 95-year-old.

Britain's longest-reigning monarch and a fixture in the life of the nation, the queen reached the milestone of 70 years on the throne on Feb. 6, the anniversary of the 1952 death of her father, King George VI. She will turn 96 on April 21.

The palace said the queen, who has been fully vaccinated and had a booster shot, would continue with "light" duties at Windsor Castle over the coming week.

"She will continue to receive medical attention and will follow all the appropriate guidelines," the palace said in a statement.

People in the U.K. who test positive for COVID-19 are now required to self-isolate for at least five days, although the British government says it plans to lift that requirement for England this week.

Both the queen's eldest son Prince Charles, 73, and her 74-year-old daughter-in-law Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall contracted COVID-19 earlier this month. Charles has since returned to work. There are also thought to be several recent virus cases among staff at Windsor Castle, where the queen is staying.

Paul Hunter, an infectious diseases expert at the University of East Anglia, said the queen would likely be given one of several antiviral drugs that have been approved in the U.K. to treat COVID-19.

"If you do get them early enough, it does reduce the risk of severe disease developing, so I would imagine any doctor for a patient in their 90s would be considering giving these antivirals," he said.

A host of senior British politicians sent get-well messages on Sunday. Prime Minister Boris Johnson tweeted: "I'm sure I speak for everyone in wishing Her Majesty The Queen a swift recovery from COVID and a rapid return to vibrant good health."

Health Secretary Sajid Javid wrote that he was "Wishing Her Majesty The Queen a quick recovery," while opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer wished the queen "good health and a speedy recovery. Get well soon, Ma'am."

Tom Holland's latest adventure 'Uncharted' tops box office

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP FILM WRITER

Tom Holland might be without his Spider-Man suit in "Uncharted," but his latest action-adventure is still doing good business at the North American box office.

The video game adaptation starring Holland and Mark Wahlberg is on its way to earning $51 million over the long Presidents Day weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday. Sony Pictures estimated its Friday through Sunday grosses will be $44.2 million, putting it at No. 1.

Though not a superhero payday, it's enough for the industry to breathe a sigh of relief as it's the biggest opening weekend since "Spider-Man: No Way Home." The weekend's other new opener, "Dog" found a modest audience too and landed in second place.

The unpredictability of pandemic-era audiences made "Uncharted" a bit of a wild card, and the poor reviews from critics had some going into the weekend with cautious optimism. The Ruben Fleischer-directed pic, based on a PlayStation game, opened on 4,275 screens.

CLAY ENOS/COLUMBIA PICTURES-SONY PICTURES VIA AP

Mark Wahlberg, right, and Tom Holland appear in a scene from "Unchartered."

"This result is yet another extraordinary testament to the appetite for the theatrical experience that Sony Pictures bet on," said Josh Greenstein, the president of Sony Pictures Motion Picture Group, in a statement.

Sony also released the megahit "Spider-Man: No Way Home" exclusively in theaters late last year. That Holland-led enterprise has now earned over $770.1 million in North America and is the No. 3 domestic release of all time.

"Tom Holland is a megastar regardless of whether he's Peter Parker or Nathan Drake," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "For many of the actors who have portrayed superheroes, breaking out of that role and having big box office success outside of that is a tough go."

"Uncharted" does have a ways to go to make up its $120 million production budget, which will likely be heavily offset by overseas earnings. Its global total has already surpassed $100 million and, unlike "Spider-Man," "Uncharted" will also get the benefit of a release in China, beginning March 14.

Channing Tatum's "Dog," which he co-directed (with his longtime producing partner Reid Carolin) and stars in, also opened on 3,677 screens this weekend. United Artists estimates that it'll earn $15.1 million for the weekend and $18.1 million including Monday. Tatum plays an Army ranger tasked with driving a traumatized military dog from Oregon to Arizona for her handler's funeral in the film, which was received well by critics and audiences. Plus, it only cost around $15 million to make.

The PostTrak survey shows that the opening weekend audience for "Dog" was 53% over age 35 and 54% was female.

"To have two movies do really solid business makes it feel like 2019 all over again," Dergarabedian said.

In its second weekend Kenneth Branagh's "Death on the Nile" landed in fourth place with $6.3 million, behind "Spider-Man," while "Jackass Forever" took fifth place with $5.2 million.

According to Dergarabedian, the momentum from this weekend should be the "perfect leadup" to the already highly anticipated release of Warner Bros. "The Batman" on March 4.

"Think about all the people in the movie theater this weekend being exposed to trailers," Dergarabedian said. "This is great news for 'The Batman.'"

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. **"Uncharted,"** $44.2 million.
2. **"Dog,"** $15.1 million.
3. **"Spider-Man: No Way Home,"** $7.2 million.
4. **"Death on the Nile,"** $6.3 million.
5. **"Jackass Forever,"** $5.2 million.
6. **"Marry Me,"** $3.7 million.
7. **"Sing 2," $2.8 million.**
8. "Scream," $2 million.
9. **"Blacklight,"** $1.8 million.
10. **"The Cursed,"** $1.7 million.

Best friend feels uneasy as wedding bells approach

DEAR ABBY: My best friend, "Sophie," just became engaged to her longtime boyfriend, "Brian." I want to be happy for her, but he doesn't deserve her. She knows it, but she won't leave.

My problem is, I may very well be asked to be maid of honor at her wedding, and I dread the idea of having to write a speech about their relationship. How do I write a speech when I have nothing good to say about it?

I know Sophie will expect something heartfelt since she's my close friend. I get anxious just thinking about it. Please give me some advice.

RELUCTANT FRIEND IN INDIANA

DEAR RELUCTANT FRIEND: When you write your speech, start by saying how long you and Sophie have been friends and how close the two of you are. Share a couple of anecdotes about what a caring, loyal, fun friend Sophie is, and state how lucky "Brian" is to be marrying her. Then toast the happy couple, wish them a lifetime of happiness together (even if you feel it won't turn out that way) and "drop the mic." You do not have to sing Brian's praises if you feel he doesn't deserve it. That privilege should belong to the best man.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I have friends—a married couple—we socialize with every few weeks. "Charles" is kind-hearted, pleasant and enjoyable, always with a good balance between speaking and listening during conversations. His wife, "Claire," on the other hand, isn't interested in hearing about our lives.

When we try to initiate a conversation, Claire cuts us off and switches the subject to a nonrelated, self-centered topic. She also interrupts Charles while he's talking. She goes on and on describing at length the minutiae of her activities and, worse, the lives of her friends (who we don't know or have any interest in). We no longer enjoy her company, but we hate to lose the connection with Charles. Any suggestions?

BORED IN MISSOURI

DEAR BORED: It may be time for you and Charles to see each other without wives in tow—for lunch or a sporting event. That way you will be off the hook having to tolerate Claire, and your wife won't have to put up with her because she can socialize with friends whose company she enjoys. I don't have a crystal ball, but I have a strong hunch you and your wife won't be the first to do this.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I met a very nice guy while I was at a bar. Because I was slightly drunk, he drove me home. We exchanged numbers and, since then, we have been out once. I'm pretty sure we will be going out again. The problem is I have no idea what his name is! We didn't exchange social media contacts. I feel awkward asking his name now. Any suggestions?

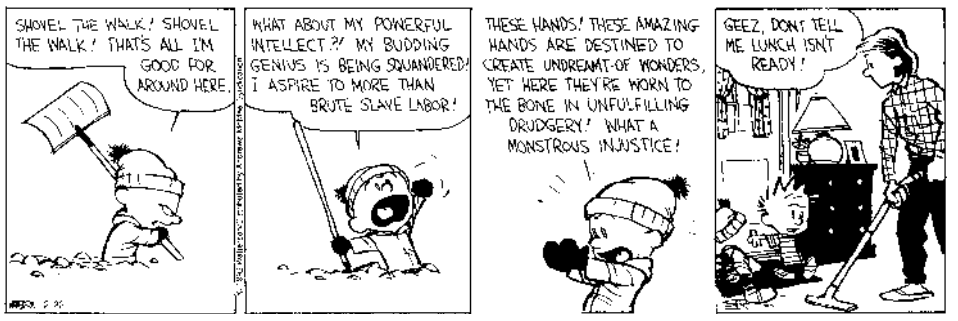
UNKNOWN IN THE WEST

DEAR UNKNOWN: Yes. The next time he gets in touch, ask him for the correct SPELLING of his first and last names "to enter into your contact list." It may manage to get you off the hook without embarrassing yourself, unless his name is John Smith.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


SHOVEL THE WALK! SHOVEL THE WALK! THAT'S ALL I'M GOOD FOR AROUND HERE.
WHAT ABOUT MY POWERFUL INTELLECT?! MY BUDDING GENIUS IS BEING SQUANDERED! I ASPIRE TO MORE THAN BRUTE SLAVE LABOR!
THESE HANDS! THESE AMAZING HANDS ARE DESTINED TO CREATE UNDREAMT-OF WONDERS, YET HERE THEY'RE WORN TO THE BONE IN UNFULFILLING DRUDGERY! WHAT A MONSTROUS INJUSTICE!
GEEZ, DON'T TELL ME LUNCH ISN'T READY!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

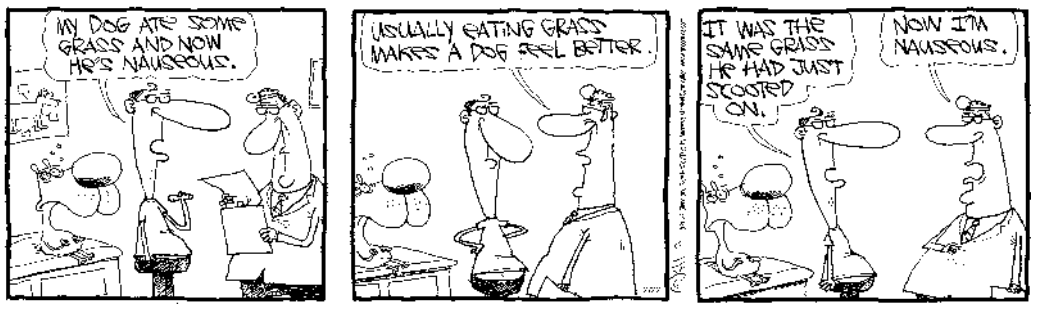
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

NO, SERIOUSLY. I WANT TO TRY THE COFFEE.
I REALLY WANT TO TRY AND SEE WHAT YOU LIKE SO MUCH.
FINE. JUST A LITTLE SIP, THOUGH.
HERE GOES. IF I GET HOOKED, GET ME HELP.
2-22

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


MY DOG ATE SOME GRASS AND NOW HE'S NAUSEOUS.
USUALLY EATING GRASS MAKES A DOG FEEL BETTER.
IT WAS THE SAME GRASS HE HAD JUST SCOOTED ON.
NOW I'M NAUSEOUS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

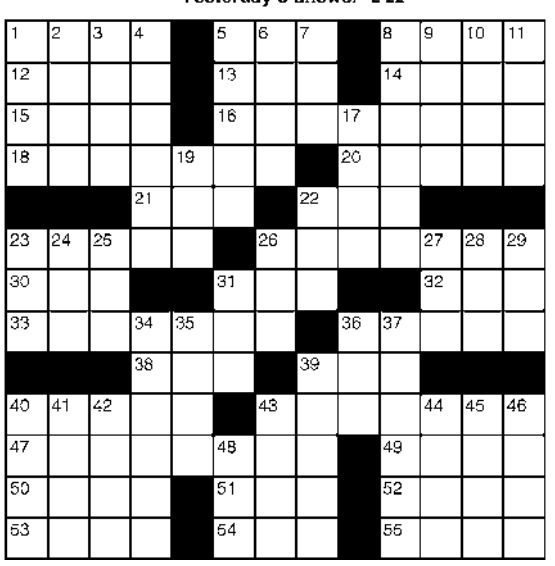
ACROSS
1 "Coffee Cantata" composer
5 TV alien
8 — Hari
12 Wrinkly fruit
13 Shell game item
14 Airline to Tel Aviv
15 Harvest
16 Actress Cruz
18 Foreign correspondents?
20 November tally
21 Fury
22 Chaps
23 Fleeting
26 Thoughtful
30 Oklahoma tribe
31 Upper limit
32 Long. crosser
33 Quintets
36 Honeycomb units
38 Apt. divisions
39 "— voyage!"
40 Brownstone feature
43 Gridiron infraction
47 Partial shadow
49 Surrealist Joan
50 Shake — (hurry)
51 Long time
52 Actor Estrada
53 TV/radio host John
54 Baseball execs
55 Toy block name

DOWN
1 Baby-feeding finale
2 Baseball's Tommie
3 Family
4 Woodstock attendee
5 Pie fruit
6 Sediment
7 Summer cooler
8 Honeydews
9 Oodles
10 Carton sealer
11 Pub orders
17 Tied
19 Canine greeting
22 Tex- — cuisine
23 Conk on the head
24 Hwy.
25 Bit of physics
26 — de deux
27 Unwell
28 Batman portrayer Kilmer
29 UFO fliers
31 Rx writers
34 Slop container
35 Clock radio toggle
36 Anti
37 Nail polish
39 Hot dog side dish
40 Quarrel
41 Prefix with conference
42 Singles
43 High school dance
44 Old Italian money
45 Advanced math
46 Music's Ono
48 Plead

Solution time: 22 mins.

B	A	I	L	■	P	A	N	■	S	P	I	T
A	L	D	A	■	R	N	A	■	U	R	S	A
L	O	C	P	■	E	N	G	I	N	E	E	R
D	E	L	T	A	S	■	S	A	S	S	E	S
■	■	■	O	B	I	T	■	N	E	U	■	■
R	■	P	P	E	D	U	P	■	T	M	A	N
I	S	R	■	T	E	R	R	E	■	E	R	A
C	O	E	D	■	S	N	E	A	K	S	I	N
■	■	■	S	O	B	■	A	S	S	N	■	■
C	H	E	R	U	B	■	E	Y	E	L	I	D
P	A	R	■	S	I	A	N	■	A	I	D	A
A	I	V	A	■	A	N	C	■	D	F	F	M
S	■	F	N	■	S	T	F	■	S	N	A	P

Yesterday's answer 2-22



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Drew Barrymore, 47; Thomas Jane, 53; Jeri Ryan, 54; Kyle MacLachlan, 63.

Happy Birthday: A positive approach to life, love and happiness starts by following your passion. Take hold of your future, and delve into something that brings you joy. Explore your talents and express your desires. Take a leap of faith by putting your heart and soul into what you want to achieve. Take responsibility, be grateful for the success you achieve. Your numbers are 3, 12, 22, 28, 32, 36, 41.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Observe, assess and respond with compassion. Nurture relationships instead of building a wall of separation. Be willing to adjust and compromise, but don't let anyone take advantage of you. An open dialogue will help you maintain peace and justice. Do what's best for everyone. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Change things up, and everything will fall into place. Be open to suggestions and eager to put muscle behind your dreams, hopes and wishes. Share your feelings, and be willing to trying something new. Love and romance are favored. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Set reasonable goals that you can achieve by yourself. Depending on others will lead to disappointment. Don't get caught up in an emotional situation that causes problems at work or can affect your position, reputation or peace of mind. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Dig in and enjoy. You'll discover talents you didn't know you have and make connections that can change your life. Pay attention to what others say and do, and the information will lead to personal growth and self-improvement. Nurture meaningful relationships. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Recognize what's going on around you, and participate in what's beneficial. Don't make a change or sign up for something for the wrong reason. Follow the path that empowers you to reach your goals, not one that tends to stifle your plans. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* You can make a difference if you concentrate on positive change, assist those who require help and look on the bright side of any situation. Take physical action and push for what you want to achieve. Create your success. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* An intellectual approach will outweigh physical action. Anger will not help you bring about positive change, but kindness and consideration will encourage others to see things your way. Be reasonable and ready to move forward alone if necessary. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Communication can make or break a deal or plans you want to pursue. Be open to suggestions, and accept changes that encourage others to feel comfortable. Home improvements and creative projects will help you overcome emotional setbacks. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep your life decisions simple, direct and doable. Use intelligence regarding money matters and when dealing with a friend, relative or peer who is out of control or in a negative space. Innovative suggestions and hands-on help are favored. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Jump in and make the changes that will brighten your day, surroundings and relationships with those you love and respect. How you deal with others, the incentives you offer, will alter the path you follow. Live, love, laugh and be merry. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* A reserved attitude will help deter an emotional situation. Go about your business and immerse yourself in projects that ease stress. Refuse to let what others do or say put you in a funky mood or lead you into an unwanted battle. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Look over your money situation, and adjust to ensure you can afford your lifestyle. Be cautious when it comes to shared expenses and joint ventures. Balance and integrity will make a difference when working alongside others. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are dedicated, loyal and original. You are secretive and cautious.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

				6	1		
		1			4	9	8
2		9			3		7
				9			1
		3			7		
6			3				
5		7			9		4
3	9	6		5			
		4	2				

Difficulty Level ★★ 2/22

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	3	7	2	6	1	5	8	9
2	5	8	9	3	4	7	6	1
6	9	1	8	7	5	3	4	2
5	4	9	3	1	2	8	7	6
8	7	6	4	5	9	1	2	3
3	1	2	6	8	7	9	5	4
7	6	4	5	9	3	2	1	8
1	8	3	7	2	6	4	9	5
9	2	5	1	4	8	6	3	7

Difficulty Level ★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

EGYPT'S LOST GOLDEN CITY **Solution: 11 letters**

A	N	N	O	U	N	C	E	M	E	N	Ⓣ	Ⓞ	Ⓜ	Ⓑ
B	R	U	T	D	D	E	R	E	V	O	C	N	U	I
A	S	C	M	S	H	C	R	A	E	S	A	N	D	S
N	K	A	H	A	O	G	L	O	N	G	C	H	S	S
D	I	R	E	A	H	L	N	E	R	O	O	M	E	K
O	N	T	D	O	E	K	V	I	S	A	E	B	V	E
N	G	O	A	Y	W	O	N	I	R	T	E	M	E	L
M	A	U	G	L	P	O	L	A	I	H	D	S	S	E
E	M	C	E	A	E	O	H	O	T	R	L	I	I	T
N	E	H	N	Y	P	P	T	S	G	U	O	R	R	O
T	N	E	E	O	S	E	E	S	L	I	T	U	P	N
E	O	I	R	R	E	I	G	N	A	O	S	O	R	E
X	T	T	P	Y	G	E	G	R	A	L	O	T	U	T
T	E	A	M	O	L	D	E	G	A	R	O	T	S	A
M	P	R	E	S	E	R	V	A	T	I	O	N	E	S

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Abandonment, Announcement, Archaeologists, Aten, Cartouche, Egypt, Items, King Amenotep, Large, Last, Long, Lost, Metropolis, Mold, Ovens, Pharaoh, Pots, Preservation, Reign, Renegade, Ring, Room, Royal, Sands, Search, Sees, Show, Skeleton, Storage, Surprise, Thebes, Team, Text, Told, Tomb, Tools, Tourism, Tutankhamun, Uncovered, Valley

Yesterday's Answer: Champion

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 50, 51 and 53 through 66,** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Curry sets 3s record, LeBron the winner in NBA All-Star Game

CLEVELAND (AP)—Stephen Curry got another 3-point record. LeBron James got another All-Star win.

Not a bad night in Ohio for the two All-Stars from Akron.

Curry turned boos to oohs and aahs with the greatest long-distance shooting performance in All-Star Game history, then James made a turnaround jumper that gave Team LeBron a 163-160 victory over Team Durant on Sunday night.

Curry made 16 3-pointers and scored 50 points, two off Anthony Davis' record. He was clearly hunting it, asking on the sideline during a sizzling third quarter how many points it would take.

"It's pretty special, obviously being back in Ohio," Curry said, seconds after being handed the inaugural Kobe Bryant MVP Trophy. "The trophy is very special. Very humble, very blessed."

AP

Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry, right, shoots for three as Memphis Grizzlies' Ja Morant defends during the second half of the NBA All-Star basketball game, Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022, in Cleveland.

On a night both players were among the greats of the game who were honored during a halftime ceremony celebrating the NBA's 75th anniversary team, Curry and James showed why they continue to stand out among today's best.

Curry missed his final 3-point attempt that would have allowed him to surpass Davis. But with James' team needing a basket to reach the target score of 163 points, they couldn't afford to keep feeding Curry.

So James pulled up from deep on the right side for the winning bucket, making him 5-0 in the format where the leading vote-getters in each conference draft teams.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 30 points, and James finished with 24 in his old home. Joel Embiid led Team Durant with 36 points.

The All-Star Game's return to Cleveland was expected to be James' night. He is the Cavaliers franchise's greatest player, having led them to their only NBA championship in 2016.

Instead, he was upstaged by Curry, who was born in the same Akron hospital three years later.

Curry finished 16 of 27 beyond the arc — sometimes well, well behind it. He launched a few from the All-Star 2022 logo near midcourt, running backward without even waiting to watch one go in.

The 3-point arc is slightly more than 23 feet away. Curry had made shots listed from 37, 33 and 34 feet during one stretch of the third quarter,

"This guy is from a different planet. He literally has an automatic sniper connected to his arm, and when he lets it go, not only himself, but everybody on the floor, in the stands, on TV, on their phones, whatever you are watching on, you think it's going in every time," James said. "Nine times out of 10 and sometimes 10 times out of 10, it does go in."

To be out there and watch that kid from Akron as well shoot the ball the way he shot it, it was unbelievable," James said. "It was pretty cool."

Curry had been booed all weekend, smiling through the sounds during pregame introductions as Cleveland fans made clear they hadn't forgiven him for helping Golden State beat the Cavaliers three times in the NBA Finals from 2015-18.

But the fans were enjoying his show too much to keep going as the game went on, though the boos returned when he was presented the MVP award that in 2020 was renamed in honor of Bryant, who won a record-tying four of them.

The trophy was redesigned this year and given to Curry in front of a crowd that included Bryant's wife, Vanessa.

Jordan, Magic honored with 75th team at All-Star halftime

CLEVELAND (AP)—The NBA celebrated its diamond anniversary with a sparkling tribute to honor 75 years on the hardwood floor.

During halftime of Sunday's All-Star Game, 45 members of the 75th Anniversary Team — including Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar — stood side by side on a circular stage in the middle of Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse.

It was a chance to take a bow for the game's biggest names, players who cut a path down the lane for today's players.

Each of them wearing blue blazers with a 75th logo on their chests, the best of the NBA's best were introduced to huge ovations, with the loudest cheers going to Jordan, who was the last player to walk onto the raised podium at center court.

AP

75 of the leagues greatest players gather on a stage during halftime at of the NBA All-Star basketball game, Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022, in Cleveland.

The forwards were brought out first with Charles Barkley leading the way. Giannis Antetokounmpo, one of six current All-Stars on the 75th team, changed out of his Team LeBron uniform for the on-court tribute.

Julius "Dr. J" Erving bowed to the crowd, and the always entertaining Dennis Rodman strutted down the wine-colored carpet wearing a basketball cap and hooded sweatshirt under his jacket.

LeBron James was the last of the forward group to be welcomed, and the former Cleveland star spun in circle to return the love coming from every corner of the arena.

When it was the centers' turn to be welcomed, Shaquille O'Neal stuck out his tongue toward the camera and posed while Abdul-Jabbar, the league's career scoring leader, mimicked his signature "sky hook."

Allen Iverson, who once scored 54 points in the building, led the guards out and was followed soon after by George "Iceman" Gervin, who made sure the crowd remembered his famed finger roll.

Before Jordan's entrance, Kobe Bryant's photo on the giant scoreboard touched off an emotional response and chants of "Ko-be, Ko-be" for the late Lakers superstar who died tragically in a 2020 helicopter crash with his young daughter, Gianna.

Even Steph Curry, who got booed during the first half of the All-Star Game, got a nice hand.

Jordan's appearance was something of a surprise as the league kept a tight lid on any details of the celebration.

The still living members of the 75th team who didn't attend were shown on video, with each saluting the fans with a wave.

This is the second time the league has honored its greats in Cleveland, after the 50th Anniversary Team was honored in 1997.

Paul unsure about hand, but sure Suns can manage if he's out

CLEVELAND (AP)—Chris Paul isn't sure if his injured right hand will be healthy enough for him to play when the Phoenix Suns return from the All-Star break.

He believes his Suns will be fine, even if his hand isn't.

Paul was injured Wednesday in a victory over Houston in the final game before the break and his hand was in a cast Saturday when he held his All-Star press conference. He said he was frustrated but also sounded optimistic.

"I've had four hand surgeries in my career. It's like my hand surgeon is part of my family, but things could be a lot worse," Paul said. "I'm still blessed, grateful that we're 48-10 and if I do miss some time, I know the guys will hold it down."

Paul was hurt when he got his hand jammed on a pass and argued for the first technical. He then bumped into referee J.T. Orr a few seconds later to earn a second technical and an ejection, leaving the court holding his right hand.

"It didn't feel good, I'll tell you that much," Paul said. "And then when you get ejected off some bogus stuff too, that don't help, either."

Paul was hoping he could still try to play Sunday night for Team LeBron, but also can't be sure when he will next play for the Suns, who have rolled to the best record in the NBA.

"For me, I always want to play. I haven't missed a game this season, you know what I mean," Paul said. "So when I did feel that in my hand I was mad for all types of reasons, but obviously we won't do anything dumb or stupid.

"So I'm going to try to heal as fast as physically possible and the second that I am able to play, I guarantee you I will be playing."

Flores hired to Steelers staff; lawsuit against NFL proceeds

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Brian Flores is back in the NFL.

The Pittsburgh Steelers hired the former Miami Dolphins coach on Saturday to serve as a senior defensive assistant. Flores will specialize in working with Pittsburgh's linebackers, a group that includes NFL Defensive Player of the Year T.J. Watt.

The hiring comes less than three weeks after Flores, who is Black, sued the NFL and three teams over alleged racist hiring practices following his dismissal by Miami. Flores led the Dolphins to consecutive winning seasons before he was fired in January.

Though he has returned to coaching in the league, Flores will not abandon the lawsuit.

"While coach Flores is now focused on his new position, he will continue with his race discrimination class action so that real change can be made in the NFL," attorneys Douglas Wigdor and John Elefterakis said in a statement Saturday.

Flores joins a restructured defensive staff in Pittsburgh after longtime coordinator Keith Butler retired. Teryl Austin was promoted to take Butler's place earlier this month.

AP

Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores smiles on the sidelines during an NFL football game against the Carolina Panthers, on Nov. 28,

"I am excited about Brian Flores joining our coaching staff given his history of developing and teaching defensive players during his time in the NFL,"x Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said in a statement. "Brian's resume speaks for itself, and I look forward to him adding his expertise to help our team."

Tomlin is the NFL's longest-tenured Black head coach and one of three Black men to lead teams last season. The other two, Flores and Houston's David Culley, were fired. Houston subsequently hired Lovie Smith, who is Black, and Miami hired Mike McDaniel, who is biracial.

"The Steelers organization is FIRST CLASS," veteran Pittsburgh cornerback Joe Haden, who will become a free agent in March, tweeted after Flores' hiring was announced.

Flores' lawsuit alleges the league has discriminated against him and other Black coaches for racial reasons, denying them positions as head coaches, offensive and defensive coordinators and quarterbacks coaches, as well as general managers. Flores also claims Miami offered him $100,000 per loss during his first season with the team in 2019 in an effort to receive a top draft pick.

The NFL has maintained the lawsuit is "without merit," although commissioner Roger Goodell said before the Super Bowl that "all of the allegations, whether they were based on racism or discrimination or the integrity of our game, all of those to me were very disturbing."

The lawsuit has also sparked the league to review the "Rooney Rule," a policy named after former Steelers owner Dan Rooney. Introduced in 2003, the policy has expanded to require NFL teams to interview multiple minority candidates for high-profile job vacancies, including head coach and general manager.

Current Steelers president Art Rooney II acknowledged recently the league has "not seen progress in the ranks of head coaches," although he pointed out strides in the hiring of women and minorities in various leadership roles.

Super Bowl run excited fans, but Bengals still need work

CINCINNATI (AP)—The Cincinnati Bengals weren't expected to be in the Super Bowl.

After all, they finished 4-11-1 and in last place in the AFC North in the 2020 season.

The Bengals were a good team in 2021, but not a great one. The Super Bowl seemed improbable up until Evan McPherson drilled a 31-yard field goal to beat the Kansas City Chiefs in overtime of the AFC championship game.

Cincinnati, expected to go through another rebuilding year, got there because of the creativity and confidence of quarterback Joe Burrow, the immediate impact of rookie receiver Ja'Marr Chase, the big leg of rookie kicker McPherson and a defense that got better as the season progressed.

It ended in the Super Bowl when a gimpy Burrow, already sacked seven times, ran out of magic on fourth-and-1 as the crushing pass rush of the Los Angeles Rams closed in again.

A couple of more seconds in the pocket and Burrow might have seen that Chase was open downfield. But Burrow's desperation flip fell incomplete, and the Bengals lost 23-20.

"I'm probably one of everybody on our staff and on our team that thinks, 'Man, if I could have just done one thing differently, maybe we would have won,'" coach Zac Taylor said Wednesday. "That's the part that you have to come to terms with and be able to move on from at some point. It also fuels us. I've had a day off now, and you want to get back to work because I want to get back to the Super Bowl to finish in the right way."

The worst-to-first Bengals finished 10-7 in the regular season, beat the Raiders 26-19 in the wild-card round and topped Tennessee by three points in the divisional round—despite Burrow being sacked nine times in the game—before capturing the AFC title in Kansas City.

The defense kept them in those games until Burrow could find a way — an overarching theme of the entire season.

Cincinnati played well in December while Baltimore and Pittsburgh faltered, giving the Bengals their first divisional title and playoff appearance since the 2015 season. The Jan. 15 win over the Raiders was the first for Cincinnati in the postseason in 31 years.

The Bengals announced Wednesday that the 38-year-old Taylor, who was 6-25-1 in the first two seasons of his first head coaching job, got a five-year contract extension.

"There's just a lot of trust in the building," Taylor said. "We have the right people."

QUITE A CATCH

The addition of Chase was the piece that gave the Bengals one of the best wide receiver groups in the NFL. The 21-year-old first-round pick had some drops in the preseason, but went on to win the Offensive Rookie of the Year award. His 1,455 receiving yards in the regular season were the most by a rookie in the Super Bowl era and the most in team history.

Tee Higgins, in his second year, and veteran Tyler Boyd also had some huge games. The three combined for nearly 3,400 yards and 24 touchdowns.

O-LINE STILL A WEAKNESS

The offensive line still needs work. Burrow was battered the entire season — the most sacked quarterback in the NFL. Against better defensive lines, like that of the Aaron Donald-led Rams, Burrow was constantly under siege. Including the postseason he was sacked 70 times — third most in NFL history. Taylor wouldn't get into specifics Wednesday about what he thinks needs to happen with the line, but expect the Bengals to look to the free-agent market for some plug-and-play help.

AND THEN THERE'S JOE

After a serious knee injury in his rookie season, Burrow returned in 2021 and got better as he continued healing. He broke a pinkie finger and sprained his other knee but never missed a game. His toughness and unwavering confidence influenced the entire team.

"We're going to keep getting better and attack next year with the same intensity," the 25-year-old quarterback said.

Taylor said Wednesday that Burrow re-aggravated the MCL sprain of his right knee in the Super Bowl, but won't need surgery and should be fine with extended rest.

FAN SUPPORT

A group of fans gathered in frigid weather outside the fence at Paul Brown Stadium to welcome home the Bengals as team buses arrived Monday night. Owner Mike Brown and Taylor are expected to be on hand as the city honors the Bengals at a rally at Washington Park downtown on Wednesday night.

A placard held by a bundled-up fan when the buses rolled in Monday summed it all up: "Thank you for bringing the fun and excitement back to Cincinnati football."

Bengals extend coach Zac Taylor's contract through 2026

CINCINNATI (AP)—Zac Taylor, who led the Cincinnati Bengals to the Super Bowl in his third season as coach, was signed to a five-year contract extension, the team announced Wednesday.

Financial terms were not disclosed.

Taylor was 6-25-1 in his first two seasons leading the Bengals, his first head coaching job. They improved to 10-7 in 2021 and went on an improbable run through playoffs before losing 23-20 to the Los Angeles Rams in the Super Bowl on Sunday night.

The 38-year-old Taylor is now signed through the 2026 season. He had one year left on his previous contract.

"The fruits of Zac's efforts were seen this year, and Zac is well-regarded by our players and coaches," Bengals owner Mike Brown said. "I know the effort and passion Zac brings to the building and to our team, and I am pleased by his approach. And I think the city of Cincinnati sees him the way the players and I do. He's brought excitement to the town and deserves credit and recognition for that."

Taylor said Wednesday he was "very appreciative."

"Of course, this isn't all about me," he said. "This is about all the people in the building who are working toward a really solid future for all of us. And so I'm excited for everybody, you know, because I certainly feel like the future is bright. There's a lot to build on."

Taylor said the deal got done Tuesday.

"It didn't take long," he said of the contract process. "We were on the same page. I'm happy here. My family is happy here. I love coming into the building every day."

Beijing's Olympics close, ending safe but odd global moment

BEIJING (AP)—A pile of figure-skating rubble created by Russian misbehavior. A new Chinese champion — from California. An ace American skier who faltered and went home empty-handed. The end of the Olympic line for the world's most renowned snowboarder. All inside an anti-COVID "closed loop" enforced by China's authoritarian government.

The terrarium of a Winter Games that has been Beijing 2022 came to its end Sunday, capping an unprecedented Asian Olympic trifecta and sending the planet's most global sporting event off to the West for the foreseeable future, with no chance of returning to this corner of the world until at least 2030.

It was weird. It was messy and, at the same time, somehow sterile. It was controlled and calibrated in ways only Xi Jinping's China could pull off. And it was sequestered in a "bubble" that kept participants and the city around them — and, by extension, the sporadically watching world — at arm's length.

On Sunday night, Xi and International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach stood together as Beijing handed off to Milan-Cortina, site of the 2026 Winter Games. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" kicked off a notably Western-flavored show with Chinese characteristics as dancers with tiny, fiery snowflakes glided across the stadium in a ceremony that, like the opening, was headed by Chinese director Zhang Yimou.

Unlike the first pandemic Olympics in Tokyo last summer, which featured all but empty seats at the opening and closing, a modest but energetic crowd populated the seats of Beijing's "Bird's Nest" stadium. It felt somewhat incongruous — a show bursting with color and energy and enthusiasm and even joy, the very things that couldn't assert themselves inside China's COVID bubble.

"We welcome China as a winter sport country," Bach said, closing the Games. He called their organization "extraordinary" and credited the Chinese and their organizing committee for serving them up "in such an excellent way and a safe way."

AP

Fireworks explode over the stadium during the closing ceremony of the 2022 Winter Olympics, Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022, in Beijing.

By many mechanical measures, these Games were a success. They were, in fact, quite safe — albeit in the carefully modulated, dress-up-for-company way that authoritarian governments always do best. The local volunteers, as is usually the case, were delightful, helpful and engaging, and they received high-profile accolades at the closing.

There was snow — most of it fake, some of it real. The venues — many of them, like the Bird's Nest and the Aquatic Center, harvested from the 2008 edition of the Beijing Olympics — performed to expectations. One new locale, Big Air Shougang, carved from a repurposed steel mill, was an appealingly edgy mashup of winter wonderland and rust-belt industrial landscape.

TV ratings were down, but streaming viewership was up: By Saturday, NBC had streamed 3.5 billion minutes from Beijing, compared to 2.2 billion in South Korea in 2018.

There were no major unexpected logistical problems, only the ones created deliberately to stem the spread of COVID in the country where the coronavirus first emerged more than two years ago.

And stemmed it seemed to be. As of Saturday, the segregated system that effectively turned Beijing into two cities — one sequestered, one proceeding very much as normal — had produced only 463 positive tests among thousands of visitors entering the bubble since Jan. 23. Not surprisingly, the state-controlled media loved this.

"The success in insulating the event from the virus and keeping disruption to sports events to a minimum also reflected the effectiveness and flexibility of China's overall zero-COVID policies," the pro-government Global Times newspaper said, citing epidemiologists who say "the COVID-19 prevention experience accumulated from this Olympics can also inspire Chinese cities to adjust their policies."

Look deeper, though, and a different story emerges about these Games.

Internationally, many critiqued them as the "authoritarian Olympics" and denounced the IOC for holding them in concert with a government accused of gross human rights violations against ethnic Uyghurs and Tibetans in its far west and harsh policies against Hong Kong democracy activists off its southeastern coast. Several Western governments boycotted by not sending any official delegations, though they sent athletes.

UMANGS

From Page 20

Jon Rebuenog, Mailee Santos, Phaungwodee Claridayles, Brayden Babauta, Marina Masga, Morris Atalig, Dermalin Hamo, Gavin Rogolifoi, Dezmon Camacho, and Greg Teregeyo.

Etpison hopes winning the 2021-2022 Co-ed Elementary Volleyball Championships will forever be seared in the memory of the Umangs' players.

"You will always remember this event, this championship in 2022. When you go to different schools, you'll wish you go back to elementary again," he said.

The KES 2 coach said it's a homecoming of sorts for the Co-ed Elementary Volleyball Championships perpetual plaque as they also won the title two years ago in 2020. William S. Reyes Elementary School won it all last year.

"We attribute this championship run to practice and teamwork. We were able to correct each other and play together and just have fun. Because if they're not having fun we cannot work together as a team. Most of our fifth graders it's their last school year that's why they made the most of it. They gave their best. Only one or two in the roster will be left."

Etpison also dedicated the championship to the parents of KES 2's players.

"It's the parents support that allowed their kids to come despite of COVID. They trust us to make their kids come and play and stay safe."

He also thanked the Public School System Athletic Programs, led by director Nick Gross, for continuing the co-ed elementary school volleyball season despite of the COVID-19 pandemic. It can recalled that Gross and company had to cancel the league and its place was a one-day tournament.

"The tournament format was better than nothing. At least the kids got to play," said Etpison.

KES 2 topped Pool B of the scaled down one-day tournament with a 3-0 win-loss record then defeated OES 1 in the quarterfinals, 21-13. The Umang then played sister-team KES 1 in the semifinals and punched its finals ticket with a 21-18 win.

OES 2, meanwhile, finished No. 1 in Pool A with a 4-0 record. The Turtles then got past Garapan Elementary School in the semis, 20-15, to set up the championship duel against the Umangs. GES earlier defeated Tinian in the quarterfinals despite trailing 15-20 at one point as the Mallards rallied behind Kanoa Owens' clutch service game.

Other teams that took part in the 2021-2022 Co-ed Elementary Volleyball Championships were Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, William S. Reyes Elementary School, Saipan International School, and Kagman Elementary School.

COACHES

From Page 20

liked how their players counter-attack and were decisive in taking their shots.

"Now, we just have to finish and complete those plays in the next games, which I expect to be more intense now that we know how Guam plays," said Ito.

It's been a while since the NMI Women's National Team dueled Guam and although Ito's players were here last year for a couple of training matches, this year they faced a different team.

"The good thing with these friendlies is we now have an idea on how Guam's current players play. You know what to expect and make the adjustments in the next game and future competitions. Players see their competition and will have helpful knowledge on how they will approach the game the next time we meet," said Ito.

Meanwhile, Okura sees the training matches as an opportunity to evaluate not only their opponents, but also her own players. Okura also coached the Guam Women's U18 National Team that lost to the NMI side, 0-4, last Saturday.

"These types of training matches are essential for both teams for overall development. With these as my first matches with Guam's teams, I was able to make assessments of the players' abilities and skills and build from this experience," said Okura, who also serves as technical director of the Guam Women's National Program.

"Before the matches this weekend, I was only able to watch film from previous international matches and work with the players in training sessions for only a few weeks beginning last month. We have not yet made any final selection for women's team training squads, as I feel I need to see more from the players who regularly come to open training sessions. These first two matches were a good test and now the players will be more motivated to train harder for better results," the Guam coach added.

Okura said they did not have competitive league matches in Guam for about two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the lack of match experience showed. She reiterated that training matches will help develop the current players and further strengthen the overall Guam Women's National Program.

NAPA

From Page 20

Alvarez dubbed as Zanjoe Marudo, would rekindle his sweet-shooting touch in the fourth, firing another 11 points as NAPA won the game by a whopping 21 points.

Alipio and Montano topscored for NAPA with 27 and 18 points, respectively. "Smoking" Jun Tabora paced DECM with his 19 markers, while Baul added 12 in support.

In the second game, The Game turned on the switch in the second half to beat Lakay Islander, 94-81.

Both teams were pretty well matched in the first and second quarters with The Game taking a 22-20 lead after the first 10 minutes of action and Lakay taking a razor-thin 43-42 spread at intermission

That all changed come the second half, as high-flying Mac Mintac found his stride, pumping in 10 points as The Game managed to get some wiggle room, 66-58, with a quarter to go in the contest.

Arnold Arellano would quickly join the offensive fireworks come the fourth as he and Mintac made mincemeat off all Lakay defenders en route to giving The Game a 13-point win.

Mintac led The Game with 23 points, while Arellano and Kerwin Dayao tossed in 19 and 18 points in support. Lakay was led by the game-high 25 points of Bry Natividad, while D.J. Ong added 15 markers.

The Inaugural SCLC Basketball League will resume this Thursday and will also have playdates on Friday and Saturday. The much ballyhooed opening ceremony of the league will be reported in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune*.

First Game

NAPA Auto 83 – Alipio 27, Montano 18, Tobias 9, Manabat 8, De Guzman 7, Bartolo 6, S. Ebuen 5, O. Ebuen 2, Abuy 1.

DECM 62 – Tabora 19, Baul 12, Joson 6, Pangelinan 6, Salazar 6, Galulu 4, Viola 3, Calunsag 2, Gatdula 2, Tagle 2.

Scoring by quarters: 29-15, 43-23, 59-40, 83-62.

Second Game

The Game 94 – Mintac 24, Arellano 19, Dayao 18, Lizama 13, Sagun 10, Rangamar 6, Hernandez 4.

Lakay Islander 81 – Natividad 25, Ong 15, Rabauliman 9, Palacios 9, Gant 7, Jandoc 5, Escano 4, Capalad 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-20, 42-43, 66-58, 94-81.

Curry sets 3s record, LeBron the winner in NBA All-Star Game

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Beijing's Olympics close, ending safe but odd global moment

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Umangs 2 tops co-ed volleyball tourney

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Koblerville Elementary School 2 sent off its graduating fifth graders with a championship after winning the 2021-2022 Co-ed Elementary Volleyball Championships last Saturday at the ChaCha Oceanview Middle School.

The Umangs met Oleai Elementary School 2 in the winner-take-all finals and defeated the Turtles, 21-12.

Coach Joe Etpison's team actually raced to an 8-1 advantage before the Turtles rallied and took the lead and eventually trailed by 4 points, 10-8.

The lead would swing back and forth between the two teams with the Umangs eventually wresting the lead for good 12-10 before scoring 9 of the next 11 points to seal the deal. As always, whoever controlled the service game got the upper hand in the game and Etpison said his team really emphasized a good service game during practices.

"We've practiced a lot on our serving game. We made them focus just to get it over the net. Focus and get a target and just focus on the target. That's all," he said.

The KES 2 team is made up of Rayvan Secharmidal,

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MARK RABAGO

Koblerville Elementary School 2 players pose with coach Joe Etpison and Public School System Athletic Programs director Nick Gross after winning the 2021-2022 Co-ed Elementary Volleyball Championships last Saturday at the ChaCha Oceanview Middle School.

Coaches emphasize importance of training matches

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

GUAM—NMI coach Angie Ito and Guam's Sakiko Ogura are looking beyond the goals scored or missed in their first two friendly games here at the Guam Football Association National Training Center, as the two officials acknowledged the benefits of the training matches for both camps.

Ito coached the NMI Women's National Team to a scoreless draw against Ogura's Masakada last Sunday night and though neither squad made it to the board, their relentless efforts on the offensive and defensive ends kept the coaches and even the spectators at the GFA facility up on their feet.

"It was a very intense game and I am just so happy that our players were able to hold their own both on offense and defense. In the last 10 minutes, Guam came out very aggressive on offense, but our collective effort on defense stopped them," said Ito, who had to endure several anxious moments in the closing stage of the game.

One of those incidents happened in the last few seconds of the match when a Guam player attacked and unloaded a cross, which the NMI's Britanny Wally anticipated, as she extended her leg in an attempt to block the ball that eventually went out. Wally in the process sustained scrapes on her left knee.

"Our girls kept their patience and composure and they showed discipline. I couldn't ask for more," Ito said.

On offense, the NMI coach

See COACHES on Page 19

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

NMI Women's National Team coach Angie Ito huddles with the players during the halftime break in their friendly game against Guam last Sunday at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

NAPA, The Game draw 1st blood in SCLC caging

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

NAPA Auto and The Game struck first as the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League unfurled last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Seeing action in the opener, NAPA leaned on the offensive prowess of center Jun Alipio and shooting guard Bernard Montano to win their masters match against DECM, 83-62.

The Mutt-and-Jeff combination scored 13 points between them in the first 10 minutes of action, as NAPA took a 29-15 lead.

It would go from bad to worse for DECM come the second quarter, as the team managed to score only 8 points. In contrast, Alipio outscored DECM all by himself, firing 9 points to help NAPA open a 43-23 spread at the half.

Ariel Baul gave DECM some semblance of life at the start of the second half as he scored 8 quick points. But it wasn't enough, as NAPA continued to lord it over their outmatched opponents and led 59-40 heading into the fourth and final quarter.

Alipio, who game announcer Alvin "Gen. Bato"

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BY MARK RABAGO

NAPA Auto's Jun Alipio goes up against DECM's Jun Tabora in their masters game in the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League last Saturday at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium.